

Jan E.M. Houben

“To Kill or Not To Kill The Sacrificial Animal (*yajña-paśu*) ?

Arguments and Perspectives in Brahminical Ethical Philosophy.”

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*En morale comme en art, il n'y aurait  
pas de solution pour celui qui veut d'abord  
assurer sa marche, rester a tout instant juste  
et maître absolu de soi-même.*

*Nous n'aurions d'autre recours que le mouvement  
spontané qui nous lie aux autres pour le malheur et  
pour le bonheur, dans l'égoïsme et dans la générosité.*  
(Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sens et Non-Sens*, p. 9)

## PART A. INTRODUCTION

### *1. Killing animals in Vedic rituals as an ethical problem: Scope and methodology of this study*

1.0 For many centuries the killing of animals in Vedic rituals has been an ethical<sup>1</sup> problem quite peculiar to South Asia and to the Vedic and Sanskritic-Prakritic tradition. Nevertheless, there are indeed several more universal sides to it. While it is to be studied in its particular South Asian historical context, one may see reflected in it the universal problematic themes of life and death, of right

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<sup>1</sup> Both the word 'moral' and the word 'ethical' go back to a word which means 'habit', 'custom', viz. the Latin *mos*, *moris* in the former case and the Greek *êthos* in the latter. Since Cicero created the term *moralis*, the terms *philosophia moralis* and *ethica* have been practically synonymous at least till the middle ages (Jüssen 1984:149). Nowadays, it is usual to attempt to distinguish between 'moral' and 'ethical', for instance by saying that "An ethical viewpoint may be understood as a more or less systematic attempt to provide an account of the meaning of moral terms, such as 'right' and 'wrong' [, whereas] a *moral* viewpoint . . . consists in the application of the term 'right' or 'wrong' to a given instance of human conduct" (Garvin 1956:309). It has also been said that 'morals' suits more a Kantian philosophy and 'ethics' an Aristotelian (Blackburn 1994 s.v. 'morality'). On both accounts I will be more concerned with 'ethics' than with 'morals' in this paper (although, at least quantitatively, the Sanskrit sources probably deal more with 'morals'). The term 'philosophy' I will take in a rather broad sense, so that it may include at least the ethical thinking of the well-known Brahminical, Buddhist and Jaina systems, as well as some precursors.

and wrong, and of selfishness and altruism: themes which are also reflected in major ethical problems of modern societies all over the world (including South Asia): killing for a (political or religious) 'higher goal', suicide, euthanasia, etc. The problem of the killing of animals in Vedic rituals has occupied the authors of numerous philosophical, legal, epical, poetical and other works in the Sanskrit-Prakritic tradition up to the present day.<sup>2</sup> This tradition, therefore, gives not only evidence of a rich variety of phenomena in the field of human habits and customs (*ēthos*) which may be confronted with modern social and ethical theories, it also offers reflections and theorizations of its own on the basis of these phenomena.<sup>3</sup>

1.1 In this essay I will adopt a special angle of approach and limit my subject in several ways. To start with the latter, one limitation is that I will be especially interested in how *philosophers* in the South Asian classical philosophical systems (mainly up to the 16th century) have dealt with this problem. What ancient Vedic authors, and non-philosophical or less philosophically inclined authors, have said about this subject has already been frequently studied and discussed by several scholars. I think of the monumental studies by P.V. Kane (1930-62), and of the studies by Ludwig Alsdorf (1962), Hanns-Peter Schmidt (1968, now also 1997), Jan C. Heestertermann (1966, 1984; also 1993:34, 81f), Boris Oguibenine (1994), Herman W. Tull (1996), and most recently Henk Bodewitz in the present volume; these scholars have been dealing mainly with Vedic literature and with Dharmaśāstric authors. Here, we will have to pay some attention to these sources as well, but only to prepare the stage for the philosophers and their arguments and perspectives.

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<sup>2</sup> Modern discussions on this topic are not only held in English and the regional languages (e.g. in national and local newspapers), but also in Sanskrit, as testified by e.g. Śrīnāgeśa Śāstrin's *Paśv-ālabha-mīmāṃsā* (n.d.) and Viswanatha Srouthy's *Paśv-ālabhana-niṣedhaḥ Yajñeṣu* (Srouthy 1993/94), the latter being a 'śāstric' defence of the offering of ghee (clarified butter, *ājya*) in Vedic sacrifices instead of a goat (*aja*).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also Schreiner 1979:294-295.

1.2 Another limitation is that, among the philosophical systems, I will focus mainly on Sāṃkhya and Vedānta. The position taken by Mīmāṃsā with regard to the problem of killing animals, in opposition mainly with Buddhists and Jainas, has been discussed quite extensively by Wilhelm Halbfass (esp. 1991), who also tried to spell out some general implications for Hinduism. (See for this also Halbfass 1988:310-348 on *dharma*; and Gune 1994, to which we will return in the next section.) The Mīmāṃsakas adopted a position of extreme reliance on traditional texts, and fully rejected the independent validity of rationality with regard to matters of *dharma*. This position is to be understood against the background of the Brahminical ritualism to which Mīmāṃsā is so strongly committed. But not all Brahmins took the same extreme Mīmāṃsā position. It is both in order to supplement the discussion by Halbfass, and on account of their own intrinsic interest, that I focus in the present essay on Sāṃkhya and Vedānta, taking into account also Sāṃkhya's sister-system Yoga. In the relationship between these systems and Mīmāṃsā we see some of the strongest dynamical contrasts within Brahminical Hinduism. However, these are very much overshadowed by the even stronger contrasts between Mīmāṃsā and the Buddhists and Jainas. Philosophers of the remaining two orthodox Brahminical systems, Vaiśeṣika and Nyāya, seem to have been caught in the Mīmāṃsā vs. Buddhist and Jaina controversy and sided, as far as the problem of killing sacrificial animals is concerned, mainly with Mīmāṃsā.<sup>4</sup> Early Vaiśeṣika did pay considerable attention to ethical problems, but, as far as I could discern, the problem of killing animals in Vedic rituals is not prominent among these.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Halbfass 1991:89; Handique 1949:389-390.

<sup>5</sup> Problems involved in killing (but not at a regular Vedic sacrifice) are briefly discussed in VaiśS chapter 6, where—as I wrote elsewhere (Houben 1994:741)—“results in the field of *dharma* of ‘giving and taking’ and ‘killing and being killed’ are made dependent upon the socio-religious status of the other person (with reference to oneself as actor) involved in the act (VaiśS 6.1.4-18; the other person may be equal, lower, or *viśiṣṭa* ‘distinguished’ or ‘superior’).” The term *ātmatyāga* used in this context is not equivalent to ‘suicide’ (as Halbfass 1991:115 note 5 suggests) but to ‘letting oneself be killed’ (thus, commenting on VaiśS 6.1.18, Candrānanda writes: *ātmano 'dhikaguṇena śatruṇā prāptasyātmāna eva ripuprayukto vadho 'ṅgikāryaḥ*). According to VaiśS 6.1.10, following Candrānanda's interpretation, a Brahmin

1.3 In order to approach the complexities of this problem in a fruitful way, it will be essential to distinguish different historical periods, as well as contrasts between concurrent perspectives within a period. A review of discussions of the problem in texts of Mīmāṃsakas, Vedāntins, Sāṃkhyas, followers of Yoga and grammarians can be found in a recent article by Jayashree Gune (1994). This article is quite valuable as a first orientation, but remains unsatisfactory in as much as the material is presented and discussed without any sharp historical distinction (except for the large one between Vedic and post-Vedic). Gune's article can be considered typical for the South Asian doxographic approach to philosophical diversity, which works with standard sets of doctrinal perspectives. This approach allowed the continuation and conservation of much quite diverse philosophical material, but the historical dimension has almost entirely got out of sight.

A rigorous historical approach to South Asian philosophy has been advocated and developed by Erich Frauwallner. Frauwallner's focus was very much on the history of ideas; any extra-philosophical factors which might influence the statements of philosophers were relegated to a distant background. In the field of South Asian logic, this method was quite successful and led to several convincing results, among them the establishment of historically clearly identifiable landmarks and turning points in the development of South Asian logic. However, philosophers usually deal with more than logic alone, and logic was not the only field within philosophy and science in which South Asia has made remarkable achievements.<sup>6</sup>

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is bad if he employs violence which inflicts bodily and mental pain. VaiśS 6.2.2 enumerates the means to produce an invisible effect (*adr̥ṣṭa*) which should contribute (according to the preceding sūtra 6.2.1) to the 'elevation' (*abhyudaya*) of the actor. Among these means is *yajña* 'sacrifice'. Candrānanda's commentary, the oldest available one, explains it with *pākayajñādayaḥ*. Since *pākayajñas* are simple Vedic house rituals which usually do not include the sacrifice of an animal, Vaiśeṣika stays here again outside the problem area of the present essay.

<sup>6</sup> One may think e.g. of linguistics (cf. e.g. Cardona 1976), epistemology (e.g. Vetter 1964), and philosophical semantics (cf. recently Houben 1997 and forthc.). In his Abhidharma studies (now also in English: Frauwallner 1995), Frauwallner's focus is not on logic any more but on Buddhist doctrinal systems.

In most areas of philosophy, in South Asia as well as elsewhere, it is not that easy to exclude all factors external to purely theoretical developments. This applies especially to ethics and its considerations on human habits and customs (*êthos*). Here, it would not be of much value to limit ourselves to the mere arguments taken at face value. Apart from (1) the arguments used in discussions (*anumāna*, *tarka*), we have to take into account (2) the philosophical commitments which precede the arguments and which in the Sanskrit tradition are usually attributable to a number of traditionally established, though in the course of time not entirely unchangeable, commitments of the major schools of philosophy (*āgama*, here to some extent comparable to Kuhn's 'paradigm', Lakatos' 'research program', or Quine's 'conceptual scheme', cf. Aklujkar 1989); and (3) the perception of reality (*pratyakṣa*) which, in spite of its relative independence and 'objectivity', is in some respects strongly influenced by the philosophical commitments. The philosophical commitments (*āgama*, 2), which a thinker usually is unwilling to subject to argumentative discussion, and the perception of reality (*pratyakṣa*, 3), which is usually so spontaneous that this too is not willingly subjected to argumentative discussion, these two together form the basis of a specific thinker's philosophical perspective on reality.

A fourth factor, finally, is to be taken into account: the environment—physical, social and philosophical—and the changes therein over time. A philosopher or a school of philosophers may continue to maintain a similar position, yet the perspective resulting from this position may change when philosophers or schools occupying neighbouring positions change their views and attitudes. In the case of ethical philosophy, also changes in the social practice (*êthos*) and the school's orientation in these changes will greatly affect the perspective of a school even if the position remains similar in wording.

Because of the crucial importance of the perspectives resulting from one's own school's position and the environment, a comprehensive history of South Asian philosophy including ethics, cannot afford to look only at the history of ideas and arguments: it should pay considerable attention to these perspectives and how they are historically situated. Within this approach one may indeed be confronted with more specific problems which deserve to be studied in the single dimension of the history of ideas. Although

the name does not matter that much, one may speak of a perspectivistic-historical approach, which does not oppose but underlies a history-of-ideas approach with its more restricted scope.

Also in other areas than philosophy and the history of ideas it is important to be aware both of linear developments and of synchronic relations. Of particular interest to us here is the discussion on the origin of asceticism, which is to be sought, according to some, in the Vedic sacrificial tradition, according to others in a non-Vedic milieu. Against the two alternative proposals for comparatively linear developments, Bronkhorst elaborated a hypothesis according to which South Asian asceticism would have two distinct sources, each belonging to a different milieu (Bronkhorst 1993b), or, as I would say, to two different contemporaneous perspectives (each with further subdivisions). On the parallel problem of the origin of the notion of *ahimsā* see Bodewitz in the present volume. In his review of Alsdorf's 1962 contribution to the history of "Vegetarismus und Rinderverehrung in Indien," Heesterman (1966) justly draws attention to the limitations of a strictly chronological approach, and thinks it more fruitful to focus on a search for the meaning of *ahimsā*, and to base oneself on an acceptance of the "persistent juxtaposition of the irreconcilable opposites." In the present essay, it is my intention to provide a sketch of how a perspectivistic-historical approach can be developed on a chosen problem.<sup>7</sup>

1.4 The problem to be discussed, the killing of animals in Vedic rituals, places us firmly in the field of ethics. And this term brings in a set of much-discussed comparative issues in the dialogue between Europe and South Asia. About a century ago Richard Garbe said that ethics was hardly attended to in the Indian (South Asian) philosophical schools.<sup>8</sup> Also more recently it has been said that ethics "was not a subject that was systematically pursued" in

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<sup>7</sup> Strong and weak points of Frauwallner's approach to the history of South Asian philosophy were pointed out by G. Oberhammer (1992), who drew attention to the importance of the "Sitz im Leben" of the philosophical systems. Cf. also Houben 1994 and forthc., b (on Frauwallner on early Vaiśeṣika and on early Sāṃkhya respectively).

<sup>8</sup> Ethics is "in der schulmäßigen indischen Philosophie fast unberücksichtigt geblieben," Garbe 1917:147.

ancient and classical South Asia (John Taber 1992, in the *Encyclopedia of Ethics*). It is true that we find in the Sanskrit tradition neither comprehensive ethical systems in the foundation and elaboration of which rationality would be of major importance, as it is, for instance, in Aristotle's ethics (e.g. in his *Nicomachean Ethics*) and Spinoza's *Ethica more geometrico demonstrata*; nor do we find investigations of ethics like Hume's *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, in which rationality plays a more limited, 'Humean' role.<sup>9</sup> Even in Buddhism, a religion with much attention for ethical problems (Tachibana 1926, Schayer 1938, Saddhatissa 1970, Chappell 1995), there is, in accordance with the Buddha's aversion to theorizing, no strong interest in philosophical or theoretical ethics: general theories can be found only if one searches hard and is ready to infer and reconstruct them (cf. recently Hallisey 1995). It can certainly not be said that ethical problems were neglected in the Sanskrit tradition, especially the Brahminical/Hindu tradition which interests us here most. However, on the basis of the transmitted sources—the numerous Dharma-Sūtras, the later lawbooks like the one of Manu, their commentaries, and eclectic compendia<sup>10</sup>—it would seem that the most important instrument in ethical and moral dilemmas was not a rationality which seeks to attain a solid basis in human reason or in generally accepted axioms and their logical elaboration, but the authoritative, sacred texts. One may speak here of a 'traditionalistic' ethics of Brāhmaṇism-Hinduism—Hacker's 'empirical ethics' terminology is to be rejected<sup>11</sup>—for which rationality is

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Blackburn 1994:319 s.v. 'rationality': "Some, such as Hume, limit the scope of rationality severely, allowing it to characterize mathematical and logical reasoning, but not to underlie normal empirical processes of belief-formation, nor to play an important role in practical reasoning or ethical or aesthetical deliberation." Although rationality could therefore not be at the basis of Hume's ethics, it was important in the investigation and elaboration of its principles.

<sup>10</sup> Compendia like the *Smṛty-Arthasāra* and the *Smṛti-Candrikā* (all ca. 10th or 11th century?), are among the first to give lists of *Kalivarjyas* (Kane III:968). Cf. below, section 5.0. For the subordination of reason to tradition, and the negative view on those overemphasizing reasoning, Halbfass 1988:278ff. That the criticism was there shows that there were also 'rationalists' to be criticized.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Hacker (1965:99, 105 [1978:502, 508]; cited by Halbfass



mainly an instrument to protect the irrationally given (i.e. the traditional laws) against rational criticism.<sup>12</sup> In as much as European philosophy found inspiration, century after century, in Socrates and his critical and rational rather than traditionalistic approach to ethical and moral problems,<sup>13</sup> it need not cause surprise that Euro-

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1988:313-314) introduced in this context the terms, 'empirische Ethik' and 'empiricism'; Hacker's terminology was used e.g. by Schreiner 1979:295; Halbfass 1988:333 accepts the term 'empiricism' without criticism, though he places it between quotation marks. These terms, however, are not very felicitous, even highly misleading: the contents of the laws are by no means established on empirical grounds. That the laws are learned either from 'good men' (who follow the Vedas) or from the Vedas (Hacker 1965:100) is a matter of 'traditionalism', which is, if the Vedas' 'authorlessness' is emphasized, a 'traditionalism' based on 'transcendentalism'; but in no way can this be termed 'empiricism' if we take into account what the term usually stands for: cf. the *Dictionary of Religion and Ethics* s.v. 'empiricism': "A philosophical or scientific method requiring all theories to be tested by or derived from experience. It is thus opposed to all forms of a priori authority" (Smith 1921). And the *Lexicon der Ethik* s.v. Empirismus: "Im Bereich der normativen Ethik . . . führt die Ablehnung der Möglichkeit nichtempirischer Erkenntnis zu einer spezifischen Position bezüglich der Ziele sittlichen Handelns . . . Praktische Vernunft . . . gewinnt ihre Zwecke aus den empirisch gegebenen Bedürfnissen, Interessen, Wünschen, Gefühlen etc., die sie dann als gut oder schlecht qualifiziert . . ." (Forschner 1977:43). All this clearly does *not* apply to Brahminical-Hindu ethics of dharmaśāstric texts which Hacker wanted to call 'empirical'. Was Hacker in the choice of his term perhaps influenced by a brief, loosely written essay on *dharma* by Ortega y Gasset (1925:401), in which this philosopher writes: "¿No significa la idea del *dharma* un sublime empirismo de la moral? Lo que yo sostengo es que no hay acto alguno indiferente, y que lo bueno en un hombre es malo en otro."?

<sup>12</sup> Several studies, some starting with the Western concepts of 'morality' and 'ethics' (McKenzie 1922, Hopkins 1924), others with the Sanskrit notion of *dharma* (Hacker, Halbfass 1988:310-348), confirm the importance of such a traditionalistic ethics in South Asia. Further confirmation can be found in studies of more specific 'ethical' notions and problems: Alsdorf 1962, for instance, in his study of 'cow worship' and vegetarianism, says we should not expect to find ethics in our sense of the term ("Ethik in unserem Sinne").

<sup>13</sup> As early as in Hellenistic times Socrates was seen as the founder of philosophy, although it is clear that also pre-socratics and thinkers contemporaneous with Socrates have had an important influence on the Greek and European philosophical tradition (cf. Kranz 1989:573). The notions of 'philosophy' and 'philosopher' in the senses known to us owe much to the Platonic Socrates, cf. Plato's *Apologia* 20d-e, *Symposion* 203-204, *Lysis* 218;

pean scholars did not recognize the Hindu-Brahminical ways of dealing with moral and ethical problems as important contributions to philosophical ethics. In Europe, the “freedom to criticize, to think rationally, and to think for oneself” (Halbfass 1988:157) has been seen as indispensable for ‘real philosophy’, and “every type of traditionalism came to be viewed as unphilosophical or even anti-philosophical” (Halbfass, *ib.*). Hence, not only large chapters in the Western history of thought (esp. the Middle Ages) were regarded as rather unimportant, also South Asian and other Oriental systems came to be looked upon as hardly deserving the name ‘philosophy’ (Halbfass 1988:145ff). Arguments against Western claims on the prerogative of scientific thinking and rationality have been put forward by Staal (1988). While rationality would be the same in India (South Asia) and in the West, the development of science in the West would have followed the paradigm of the mathematician Euclid, whereas India followed that of the grammarian Pāṇini (Staal 1965, cf. Ingalls 1954).<sup>14</sup> As we will see below, in South Asian philosophy those emphasizing rationality are not entirely absent, though they often appear in the secondary role of objectors who are refuted by defenders of the dogmas of the major systems (Halbfass 1988:278ff). And even if one does not subscribe to all of their views and commitments, Kumārila’s and Śaṅkara’s rational criticism of rationality as well as their rational defences of the irrationality of the given tradition are themselves not without philosophical interest.<sup>15</sup> For the following review of

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and Kranz 1989:576: “Gegen die Auffassung der Sophisten, Ph[ilosophie] oder Sophia als verfügbares Wissen wie Ware für Geld an Schüler weitergeben zu können, versteht Platon Ph[ilosophie] als ein ‘Sich-Bemühen’ um Wissen.” The anecdote, already popular in antiquity, according to which Pythagoras would have been the one to use the term ‘philosopher’ for the first time in the specific sense of a seeker for wisdom, is to be distrusted (Überweg 1953: I:2).

<sup>14</sup> Mention may also be made of a remark of R.G. Bhandarkar in 1873, to which Prof. Dr. S.D. Laddu (Pune) kindly drew my attention: “Sanskrit Grammar has thus become a science at [Pāṇini’s and other grammarians’] hands, and its study possesses an educational value of the same kind as that of Euclid and not much inferior to it in degree” (Bhandarkar, preface to the third edition [1873] of his *Second Book of Sanskrit*, 1919:xi).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Halbfass 1991:32 on Kumārila: “The Veda . . . is invoked and projected as a response to fundamental problems of epistemology, semantics, ethics, etc., and to questions concerning the limits of rationality and

material concerning the problem of killing in Vedic rituals, these issues are of fundamental importance throughout, even if this cannot be explicitized at each point. On some aspects, however, we will briefly touch again in the concluding section.

## *2. Historical context of the problem of killing animals in Vedic rituals*

2.0 What exactly is here the problem? In many Vedic rituals, especially the larger ones, the killing of one or more victims (mostly non-human animals, occasionally humans) is prescribed. The Vedic ritualistic system, as we know it from the ancient sources such as the Brāhmaṇas and Śrauta-Sūtras, shows a certain ambivalence in this regard: on the one hand, killing is important, and it is even central in the sacrifice; on the other hand, acts of violence are avoided, concealed, and denied. A real problem arises when the two poles of this ambivalence become so strong that they become irreconcilable.

2.1 In a weak form we see the problem already in an early Upaniṣad, the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad (8.15), which emphasizes that no living beings should be injured or killed, but makes an exception for the killing in Vedic sacrifices:

(He, who) . . . does not harm any living being, except at sacred (sacrificial) places . . . he who behaves thus throughout his life attains the world of Brahma . . . <sup>16</sup>

In this statement it is admitted that under some circumstances (at sacred, sacrificial places) harm is inflicted on living beings.

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philosophy itself"; Halbfass 1991:13ff on "Human reason and Vedic revelation in Advaita Vedānta"; and Gellner 1992:179: "The Impotence of Reason is itself an independent truth of reason."

<sup>16</sup> . . . *ahiṃsan sarvabhūtāny anyatra tīrthebhyaḥ . . . sa khalv evaṃ vartayan yāvad āyusaṃ brahmalokam abhisamṣadyate . . .*

On the word *tīrtha* see Venkateswaran 1966, and Ṛgveda 10.114.7 with Geldner's note, Śaḍviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa 3.1.4-6, Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa 18.9.

A mild repudiation of this may very well be at the background of another statement in the same Upaniṣad,<sup>17</sup> according to which those relying on rituals and prescribed acts will after their death follow the 'way of the fathers', which means they will at one time return to the earth. They go to the world of the fathers, and then further to the moon where they remain for some time. On their way back they become wind, mist and rain, and are eventually born as rice, barley, herbs, trees, sesame plants and beans. When these are eaten and emitted as semen they can be born as a human being. Here, a further distinction has been made: they attain either a good and beautiful womb (*ramaṇīyā yoni*) and become a Brahmin, Kṣatriya or Vaiśya if their conduct in their former existence was good and beautiful; or a stinking womb (*kapūyā yoni*) and become a dog, swine or outcast (*caṇḍāla*) if they were of stinking conduct.

Those relying on knowledge and faith, however, will follow a quite different way, the 'way of the gods': they reach the world of Brahman and attain full liberation from earthly existence. Apparently, knowledge and faith (leading to full liberation) are valued higher than the rituals (which can at the most lead to a 'high birth' on earth). Although, as we will see below, it is emphatically rejected in Śaṅkara's commentary and some other commentaries (though not all) on Brahma-Sūtra 3.1.25, a possible and quite natural conclusion would be that the rituals are connected with some form of demerit or lack of merit (presumably on account of the prescribed killings) from which knowledge and faith are free.<sup>18</sup> Finally, the same Chāndogya-Upaniṣad mentions *ahiṃsā* 'non-

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<sup>17</sup> ChāndUp 5.3-10; cf. BṛhadĀrUp 6.2; JaimB 1.18. For these and other passages dealing with the so-called 'Five-Fire Doctrine', see also Schmithausen 1991, 1994, 1995; and Bodewitz 1992, 1996 and forthc.

<sup>18</sup> According to Śaṅkara, those who attain the way of the gods (ChāndUp 5.10.1, *ya itthaṃ viduḥ*) include the householders (who perform the prescribed rituals). It is true that the knowledge which qualifies for the way of the gods is stated in ritualistic terms, but it should be added that the knowledge consists of homologizations (yonder world, the rain-cloud, the earth, man, and woman are sacrificial fires) which point beyond ritualism and seem to make it superfluous (ChāndUp 5.3-9). This knowledge was moreover propounded not by a Brahmin but by a Kṣatriya. The author/composer of the ChāndUp is therefore definitely less positive about Vedic sacrifices than suggested by Śaṅkara (cf. Bodewitz 1992:17, and forthc. section 3).

harming' in a list of virtues (3.17.4), which seem meant not for ascetics but for householders (the list includes *dānam* 'liberality'; the equivalent virtue expected for ascetics would be *aparigraha* 'non-acceptance of gifts'<sup>19</sup>).

2.2 The importance as well as embarrassment of killing in ritual may be illustrated by some examples. The ritualistic way to avoid inflicting violence on a victim is to replace the victim by another victim or a mere object, the killing or destruction of which seems less problematic. Thus, from ŚB 1.2.3.5-9 we understand that the ricecake to be offered at the new- and full-moon sacrifices is a substitute for an animal victim: "Now it is as an animal victim that this sacrificial cake is offered."<sup>20</sup>

The killing in a sacrifice, if it takes place, is relatively concealed: When in the horse-sacrifice (*Aśvamedha*), or in a simple animal sacrifice (*Paśubandha*) the victim is to be killed, the sacrificer and the other priests bring it in a solemn procession to a separate spot outside (north of) the Great Altar Space. There it is killed by the priest who is appointed for this purpose: the *Śamitṛ*, 'slaughterer', or, more literally, 'quietener'. But before this happens the sacrificer and the other priests have turned away from the horse and have gone back to the Great Altar Space. The killing is not only visually concealed by placing it outside the Great Altar Space and by having the sacrificer and priests (except for the *Śamitṛ*) turn away from it, it is also auditively concealed by killing

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<sup>19</sup> The list is *tapas, dāna, ārjava, ahimsā, satyavacana*. The item *dāna* would suit a list of virtues of a householder rather than a renouncer. Nevertheless, in Baudhāyana DhS 2.10.18.2 *tyāga* 'liberality' occurs in a list of virtues of an ascetic. See further Bodewitz, present volume (section 5.1-6), who also discusses some other early Brahminical (Gautama-, Āpastamba-, Vasiṣṭha-Dharma-Sūtra) and non-Brahminical (Jaina and Buddhist) sources in which *ahimsā* is mentioned as a virtue.

As pointed out by Bodewitz, *ahimsā* generally does not occur in the 'active' sense of 'non-injuring, not inflicting injury to another living being, harmlessness' in early texts such as the TS (where the term does occur in the 'receptive' sense 'non-injury, personal safety'; an early and exceptional occurrence of the word in an 'active' sense seems to be found in TB 3.9.8.3, note 57 and Houben in prep., b).

<sup>20</sup> *paśūr ha vā eṣā ālabhyate yāt puroḍāśaḥ*, ŚB 1.2.3.5.

it in such a way, by suffocation or strangulation, that it does not make a sound.<sup>21</sup>

The killing is further also denied<sup>22</sup>: When the animal is being killed in the Paśubandha, the sacrificer, in turning away from the animal and its slaughterer, says the following mantra: “You do not really die here, you are not hurt; you are going to the gods along paths easy to traverse, where those go who have acted well, not the evil-doers. May the god Savitr place you there.”<sup>23</sup> In the Aśvamedha, a similar mantra, viz. RV 1.162.21,<sup>24</sup> forms part of the recitation of the Hotṛ-priest before the horse is brought to the place where it is killed. The denial of the killing continues after the suffocation of the horse, when mantras speaking of a ‘sleeping horse’ accompany the pairing of the chief queen with the horse (cf. Jamison 1996:65ff).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. ŚB 3.8.2.15; BauŚS 4.6-7 and 15.28; Dumont 1927:175, 335. In the Aśvamedha the horse was suffocated by means of a cloth saturated with clarified butter (*tārpya*), a device which apparently functioned like a plastic bag preventing the horse from getting fresh air.

<sup>22</sup> It would be a mistake to assume that this denial was *only* a matter of rhetorics, as Oguibénine 1994 seems to suggest. The complex structure of texts (mantras and Brāhmaṇa-explanations) and ritual actions justify also a more empathic approach (as adopted e.g. by Krick 1977) which tries to uncover implicit beliefs of the composers of texts and rituals. The denial is then an expression of what the author (and the later reciter) sincerely thinks (or hopes) to be the case.

<sup>23</sup> TB 3.7.7.14: *ná vā uv etán [read accent thus] mriyase ná riṣyasi devāṃ id eṣi pathíbhiḥ sugébhiḥ | yātra yānti sukṛto nāpi duṣkṛtaḥ tātra tvā devāḥ savitā dadhātu ||* According to Sāyaṇa’s introductory comments on this mantra in the TB, the sacrificer murmurs this in turning away (*parāvṛttau*), according to ĀpŚS 7.16.7 however just before he turns away from the animal.

<sup>24</sup> *ná vā u etán mriyase ná riṣyasi devāṃ id eṣi pathíbhiḥ sugébhiḥ | hárt te yúnjā pṛṣatī abhūtām úpāsthād vājī dhurī rāsabhasya ||* The first line is practically identical with TB 3.7.7.14. As a literary whole the Rg-Veda is older than the Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa. But from the point of view of the ritual one does not expect the extraordinary Aśvamedha to be older than the simple animal sacrifice. Therefore, if one allows for some variation over time, the TB-mantra for the animal sacrifice may be at least as old if not older than the mantra for the horse sacrifice according to RV 1.162.21 (as it seems to be the case more often, the author of the hymn may have incorporated (part of) an existing mantra into his hymn).

The important point is now that, if we take the ritual of the Brāhmaṇas and Śrauta-Sūtras as our starting point, we see the traces of an earlier stage in which violence was less concealed. The Rg-Vedic hymn which contains the mantra according to which the sacrificed horse does not really die, contains some incidental, but for that reason not less interesting, references to the practice of the ritual, for instance: "That part of you [o horse!] which is sticking to the sacrificial post, or to the axe, [that part of you] which [is sticking] to the hands or nails of the slaughterer, all that too should be among the gods."<sup>25</sup> In the past, therefore, the horse was not discretely suffocated at a separate spot, but it was killed with an axe at the sacrificial post on the altar space. Similarly, in the classical ritual the victim of the simple animal sacrifice is bound to the sacrificial post in a peculiar way which only makes sense if we assume that it was formerly not strangled but slaughtered with a knife.<sup>26</sup>

While the motivation for offering victims is not so difficult to reconstruct e.g. in the light of the 'guest-reception' symbolism showing through in several details of the Vedic, and even of the Indo-Iranian, ritual,<sup>27</sup> it is less easy to spell out the motivation for the increasing embarrassment about ritual violence. But there is no indication that an ideal similar to that of modern 'non-violence' played a direct role. If the ritual texts show a motivation for avoiding, concealing, and denying the violence at all, it is a 'magico-ritualistic' one: the sacrificer and priests fear the bad effects on themselves which the violence afflicted to the victim may have: "The Adhvaryu-priest turns away from the animal as it is

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<sup>25</sup> . . . *yād vā svārau svādhītau riptām āsti | yād dhāstayoh śamitūr yān nakhēṣu sārṇā tā te āpi devēṣv astu ||* RV 1.162.9bcd.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Heesterman 1962:18. Schmidt (1997:225) is unwilling to accept that the change in ritual practice (esp. in the horse sacrifice) points to an increasing embarrassment with violence. He suggests the change results from a shift in the relation of Vedic people to blood. For this, as Schmidt in fact admits, there is no indication at all.

<sup>27</sup> Thieme 1957; Heesterman 1993:35-40. While a pattern of 'guest-reception' is clearly present in Vedic sacrifice, this does not lead to an exhaustive explanation of its structure and internal semantics. In Heesterman's partly speculative reconstructions of pre-classical sacrifice, the 'guest-reception' is one form or one aspect of a more pervasive agonistic structure.

slaughtered; he conceals himself from the animals, in order to remain uninjured himself.”<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa indirectly gives a general—non-magico-ritualistic—ethical judgement when the violence concerns the *human* animal as victim. When the description of the Puruṣamedha reaches the point that the human victims are to be killed, the author switches to a narrative mode (“Now, the victims had had the fire carried round them, but they were not yet slaughtered”) and lets a mysterious voice say to the sacrificer and priests: “Puruṣa, do not consummate (these human victims): if thou wert to consummate them, man (puruṣa) would eat man”; next, the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa continues: “Accordingly, as soon as fire had been carried round them, he set them free, and offered oblations to the same divinities . . . ” (ŚB 13.6.2.12-13,<sup>29</sup> tr. Eggeling).

<sup>28</sup> TS 6.3.8.3: *pārāṇ ā vartate 'dhvaryūḥ paśóḥ sañjñāpyāmānāt, paśúbhya evā tán ní hnute, ātmánó 'nāvaskāya; paśúbhya . . . ní hnute* perhaps also “he makes excuses to the animals,” cf. Caland on ĀpŚS 7.16.7. On the fear for bad results cf. further Schmidt 1968:645, 1997:214-215, and Bodewitz, present volume, section 4.1. For a contemporaneous version of the fear of bad results of killing and ritualistic means of averting them cf. Dimock cited by Doniger O’Flaherty 1987:176 (also referred to by Schmidt 1997:215).

The problems of the nature of the ‘magico-ritualistic’ belief-system and its relation with rationality—not just our rationality, but also that of the South Asian scientific and philosophical tradition—can only be hinted at here. On the first, the ‘magico-ritualistic’ belief-system, one may compare e.g. Henry 1904, Oldenberg 1919, Schayer 1925a and 1925b, Schmithausen 1997 (all focusing on ancient South Asia), and Tambiah 1990 and Lewis 1994. Its relation with (forms of) rationality in the South Asian tradition poses important problems of which scholars so far seem to have remained largely unaware, as they were more interested in the contrast with ‘Western’ rationality.

<sup>29</sup> *tāt páryagnikṛtāḥ paśávo babhūvur āsamjñāptāḥ | átha hainām vāg ābhyuvāda | púruṣa mā sámītiṣṭhipo yádi samsthāpayisyási, púruṣa eva púruṣam atsyatīti | tán páryagnikṛtān evódasrjat | taddevátyā āhutīr ajuhota . . .* It is difficult to fully dissociate the increasing embarrassment with killing (and eating) humans from a progress in the direction of *ahiṃsā* as Schmidt 1997:212 wants to do (contra Witzel 1987). Even in most elaborate doctrines of *ahiṃsā* (such as that of the Jainas) there is a hierarchy of beings ‘not to be killed’ (killing the lowest elemental ones is less problematic than killing higher ones), and one has to start somewhere in this hierarchy. If killing humans is not problematic, killing other animals must be still less so.



A similar embarrassment about human sacrifice we find in the well-known story of Śunahśepa, whose father not only sold him to serve as the victim at a sacrifice (to replace king Hariścandra's son who had to be sacrificed to Varuṇa according to an old promise by his father), but who subsequently also volunteered to function as the slaughterer; then, his son managed to escape from the sacrificial post thanks to Viśvāmitra's good advice and the recitation of some hymns when he, bound to the sacrificial post, was about to be slaughtered by his father (AiB 7.3).<sup>30</sup>

Whether the embarrassment shown at these places concerns an earlier actual practice of human sacrifice or just a theoretical possibility is controversial.<sup>31</sup> The actual occurrence of a human sacri-

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<sup>30</sup> It is to be noted that the story expresses more the embarrassment about a father first selling and next being willing to slaughter his son, than about the ritual slaughter of a human as such; that the latter is an extreme but acceptable option is rather the underlying presupposition of the story throughout, from the very moment king Hariścandra, desperate for male progeny, promises Varuṇa to offer him his son if he gets one (cf. also Mitra 1881:75). One further notes that, although the later Mīmāṃsā-tradition would consider this story a mere *arthavāda* 'proclamation of the purpose (of a rite)', and hence not necessarily a true record of actual events, the story is more than a quickly invented tale to encourage the performance of specific ritual acts. The story is to be recited in certain contexts (esp. during the Rājasūya), and the very recitation and listening to it is expected to produce certain positive results. This makes it an early instance of South Asian epic literature. While the story need not be (was certainly not in all details) an account of actual events, it says much about what was regarded as normal, what as exceptional, and what as unacceptable (: not the slaughter of a human as such) by the author(s) and the public.

<sup>31</sup> Thus, when Gonda (1975) comes to speak of the human sacrifice (p. 292, 330, 351, 354, 395) he emphasizes at each place that it was probably never actually performed (e.g. p. 351 note 69: "This sacrifice, as it is described in some sūtras, was in all probability never performed."). According to Halbfass 1991:94: "There is no evidence that . . . human sacrifices played an actual role in the Vedic ritual tradition." Handiqui 1949:382f does not think that the classical Puruṣamedha was ever actually performed. The places I will mention below in section 2.3 show that these judgments are not valid in at least some milieus and in some periods. In a long article—in fact two articles in one, one on the Nārāyaṇa-bali (pp. 71-91 and 126-141) and the other on the Puruṣasūkta (pp. 91-126)—Hertha Krick briefly mentions that the ŚB 13.6.2.13 rejects the killing of the human victims, but that in the AV and RV schools their death is actually brought about (1977:93 note 94); she further

fice will probably always remain difficult to prove or disprove, because relevant pieces of evidence would be small in number and open to diverging interpretations. But there is something else which is perhaps of even greater importance in South Asian social history, and that is the *acceptability* of human sacrifice. Our sources give us more direct information on precisely this acceptability, rather than on actual occurrences. The combined evidence of the embarrassment shown here and of texts of two Vedic schools which do conserve laconic yet sufficiently clear prescriptions for a real human sacrifice (ŚāṅkhŚS 16.10-14, VaitS 37.10-38.9<sup>32</sup>), suggest that at one time a human sacrifice was indeed *acceptable* to even wider circles than the groups associated with these two schools. In addition there is the anthropological evidence for real human sacrifices in South Asia and neighbouring areas and in Indo-European

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points out that in the Puruṣamedha sacrificial death is important in two aspects: as the actual death of the human victim, and as the own death anticipated by the sacrificer (1977:93). The AV and RV schools mentioned by Krick must refer to Vaitāna-Sūtra 37.10-38.9 and ŚāṅŚS 16.10 respectively. Krick, speaking about an indeterminate early period, also points out that death at a sacrifice is seen as a way to heaven or liberation (1977:93, 102 and note 115 (b)).

Further on human sacrifice (= h.s.): Weber 1864 (discussing several Vedic indications for h.s.), Mitra 1881b:49-113 (whose texts and translations are not always reliable), Hillebrandt 1897:153 (argues that the real h.s. is in the course of time suppressed; the mention of a non-transmitted Puruṣamedha-section as part of the contents of the Kāthaka-Saṁhitā, Weber 1864:71, also points in this direction), Eggeling 1900:xxxiii-xlvi (cannot imagine that h.s. occurred), Oldenberg 1917:362ff (Puruṣamedha is product of priestly fantasy, but human sacrifice may have occurred nevertheless), Kirfel 1951 (with hypothesis that an early form of Puruṣamedha must have preceded the Aśvamedha), Schlingloff 1969 (refutes the claim that the Kauśāmbī site was that of a Puruṣamedha, G.R. Sharma 1960), Thakur 1978 (refers to older sources on h.s., sometimes without the required precision), Obeyesekere 1997 (on ancient Sri Lankan Pali sources and surviving oral myths on construction sacrifice). On the five heads—those of a human, a horse, a cow, a goat and a sheep—to be inserted into the brick altar in the Agnicayana (also part of Aśvamedha) cf. Heesterman 1985. See finally in the present volume Feller Jatavallabhula on the Mahābhārata war as sacrifice, and Jordaan & Wessing on the construction sacrifice.

<sup>32</sup> Garbe's forced interpretation of VaitS 37.23 according to which the Adhvaryu-priest has an animal bound to the sacrificial stake instead of the human victim is to be rejected (cf. Eggeling 1900:xliv and note).

cultures,<sup>33</sup> which suggests that the human sacrifice was not just a theoretical construct of ritualists, but a ‘real option’ which, in one form or the other, may very well have been occasionally put to practice. We note that the classical system of Vedic sacrifice also allows a sacrificer to seek his own death by means of special performances such as the Śunaskarṇa Agniṣṭoma, which is a relatively simple modification of the standard Soma-sacrifice (Agniṣṭoma). Technical problems in this remarkable sacrifice were discussed in the Śrauta-Sūtras, in early Mīmāṃsā and by Bhartṛhari, but it did not give rise to any ethical discussions.<sup>34</sup>

In short: we see here an earlier period in which there is relatively little embarrassment about violence in ritual, and a subsequent period, reflected in most of the Brāhmaṇas and Śrauta-Sūtras, in which this embarrassment increases. This increasing embarrassment can also be seen as a development in the direction of avoiding violence. Positive statements on ‘non-violence’ are rare in the early Brahminical literature, but we saw one in the cited place of the

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. the encyclopedic overviews in Westermarck 1912:434-476 and in the *Encyclopaedia of religion and ethics*, ed. by J. Hastings, Edinburg 1913, s.v. “Human Sacrifice” (with Gait 1913 on “Human Sacrifice (Indian)”); and cf. the references to older anthropological research in Thakur 1978; also Feller Jatavallabhula and Jordaan & Wessing, present volume.

<sup>34</sup> The main problem is whether the priests should continue the performance even after the sacrificer has died. The answer provided by both Śābara and Bhartṛhari is positive, though they argue for their position in quite different ways (Śābara-Bhāṣya 10.2.57-61, Bhartṛhari MBhD 4:6.11-12; cf. Bronkhorst 1989:107f [1994:377-378]). Kumārila, in his *Ṭup-ṭikā*, had nothing to say on the relevant passage in the Śābara-Bhāṣya. In the light of the complete lack of support for this scenario in the older Brahminical literature (JB 2.167-169, PB 17.12, BauŚS 18.48, ĀpŚS 22.7.20-25, LātyŚS 8.8.1-42), the statements which our text of the Śābara-Bhāṣya (10.2.57) makes about the sacrificer’s entering the fire (instead of lying down next to it) is of doubtful reliability. The sacrificer’s death is brought about ‘magically’ by certain details in the performance (the Sāmavedins emphasize the special way of singing the tonal accents in this performance); if the sacrificer does not find the death he desires he may fast to death after the ceremony, or give up his project of dying (cf. LātyŚS 8.8.40-41). Another performance which should end with the death of the sacrificer is the Dṛṣadvatī-Sattra (PB 25.13: the sacrificer should disappear from the world of men during the concluding bath in the Yamunā). On these sacrifices and the theme of “self-sacrifice in Vedic ritual” cf. also Heesterman 1987.

Chāndogya-Upaniṣad—which, as an Upaniṣad, is of course not so strongly committed to ritualism. The Vedic ritualists, in any case, though we can perceive an increase in the embarrassment about violence, seem not to have been front runners in the development. If there were front runners, they were to be found among the ascetics and the anti-ritualists, whether they had a Vedic or non-Vedic background. But especially among the non-Vedic ascetics and anti-ritualists who organized around two historical figures, the Mahāvīra and the Buddha (ca. 4th century B.C.E.), the ideal of ‘non-violence’ found fertile soil.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. the textplaces discussed by Alsdorf (1962:47-49), who concludes this section with the remark: “Das kann doch nur bedeuten, daß nicht etwa der Jinismus—und Gleiches gilt a fortiori vom Buddhismus—die eigentliche Quelle der Ahimsā war, die, wie oft angenommen, von den Reformreligionen auf die brahmanische Religion übergegriffen hätte; vielmehr ist deutlich, daß Buddhismus und Jinismus nur teilnehmen an einer gemeinindischen Geistesbewegung, die freilich bei ihnen besonders günstige Vorbedingungen traf und daher von ihnen mit besonderem Eifer aufgegriffen und mitgemacht wurde.” This well-argued intermediate judgment should apply to a different period than the not quite convincing hypothesis elaborated in the final 16 pages of Alsdorf’s article, viz. that of a (predominantly) ‘pre- or non-Aryan’ (in Alsdorf’s argument apparently but contestably meaning non-Brahminical, non-Jaina and non-Buddhist) source of *ahimsā* and vegetarianism (and, at the same time, of the bloody offerings (!) to Kālī) (Alsdorf 1962:53-69).

The former judgment may suggest an ‘orthogenetic’ development within the Vedic sacrificial system as one of the theoretical options (Heesterman 1984), but although its serious investigation is legitimate, this should not be based to a large extent on Brahminical texts clearly posterior to the time this common Jaina-Buddhist-Brahminical development started to manifest itself (such as the Mahābhārata and the Manu-Smṛiti), as is done by Schmidt 1968 (to whom Heesterman aligns himself) and Tull 1996. The idea of a common development, if due emphasis is laid on the different roles played in it by non-ritualist fore-runners and ritualist followers, is, for the period concerned, in harmony with the main findings of Bodewitz (this volume), to whom the role of the ritualists appears even more passive, as he focuses on the positive ideal and explicit notion of *ahimsā*. Schmidt is in his 1997 article in this respect as unconvincing as twenty nine years before. Unsupported, apodictic statements like “It is obvious that the emancipation from the magical approach has to be sought in the ritualists’s own circle” and, on the theory of rebirth and liberation, “This doctrine was developed in ritualistic circles” (Schmidt 1997:221) beg the question. When Schmidt (1997:228) observes: “My main argument was and is that the Vedic sources do allow us to reconstruct a

2.3 That there was indeed a broader South Asian development in the direction of 'non-violence', also reflected in Brahmanism, is confirmed by the Edicts of Aśoka, 3d century B.C.E., which seem to appeal not to exclusively Buddhist, but rather to broader South Asian ideals.<sup>36</sup> While the Buddhists and Jainas were certainly in the vanguard, and the Brahmins, including the Upaniṣadic thinkers, often remained far behind, they nevertheless all went mainly in the same direction, namely in the direction of an increasing importance being attributed to 'non-violence' in the sense of avoidance of injury to living beings.

This changes as soon as the contrasts between Brahminical and non-Brahminical groups, especially Buddhists, become sharper. A tangible turning point is the fall of the Maurya-dynasty (the one to which Aśoka belonged) in the second century B.C.E., and the coming to power of Puṣyamitra, who certainly did not shrink from having bloody Vedic sacrifices performed.<sup>37</sup> While the Buddhists

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development within the Vedic culture," one may answer: It may be possible to do so, but the exercise is not called for: we know that intensive and dynamic relationships existed between Vedic and non-Vedic groups even before the development under discussion became noticeable.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* 1961 as referred to and discussed by Alsdorf (1962:49-53), who concludes "So dürfen wir abschließend wohl sagen, daß auch Aśokas Ahimsā und Vegetarismus nicht buddhistischen Ursprungs, sondern Teil gemeinindischer religiöser Entwicklung sind, daß sie aber allerdings durch seinem Buddhismus begünstigt und bestärkt werden."

<sup>37</sup> The general Puṣyamitra who usurped the Maurya-empire is credited with the performance of the first Aśvamedha (horse sacrifice of exclusive royal status) after a long time. Cf. Kulke & Rothermund 1990:71, 73f. The authors add that an archeological site near Kauśāmbī would contain the remains of a Puruṣamedha (human sacrifice) celebrated by Puṣyamitra (G.R. Sharma 1960), but this is since long disproven (Schlingloff 1969). For Puṣyamitra's performance of the Aśvamedha, on the other hand, there is sufficient inscriptional and literary evidence (cf. Ramachandran 1952:26; Pathak 1960; Patañjali's MBh under P 3.2.123). As far as I could see, Puṣyamitra is the earliest performer for whom inscriptional evidence is available. In the Maurya-dynasty the Aśvamedha may have been out of vogue, which would justify the claim that Puṣyamitra was the first after a long interruption at least for the Mauryan empire (of which parts seem to have become independent after Aśoka's death). Before Aśoka the Aśvamedha may have been performed by sufficiently strong kings (if they were not too much influenced by Jainism or Buddhism). That a horse sacrifice in some respects similar to the classical

generally continued to adhere to the universalized ideal of 'non-violence' in this new period,<sup>38</sup> the earlier Brahminical tendency to 'non-violence' changed into its counterpart: a cultivation of ritual violence.<sup>39</sup> Violent rituals are now being positively defended against the claims of a universal ideal of non-violence.<sup>40</sup> Violent rituals are also actually performed: they symbolize the victory and success of a ruler, but also of the Brahminical social system.<sup>41</sup> In

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one occurred in Rgvedic times can be inferred from RV 1.162-163 and 3.53.11. Buddhist canonical texts mention the Aśvamedha, together with Puruṣamedha, Vājapeya, and two problematic ones, called *sammāpāsam* and *niraggala* in Pali, among the royal Vedic sacrifices which are to be rejected as being ineffective (Falk 1988:230-231).

<sup>38</sup> Apart from a few exceptions, some of which rather spectacular (e.g. Hevajra and other tantric schools; Buddhist priests in Nepal who officiate at animal sacrifices which are avoided by Hindu priests, A.W. van den Hoek, pers.), the Buddhists have for several centuries emphasized at least in theory the Buddha's prescription not to kill living beings. For the theoretical acceptance of this prescription and the possible conflicts in the practice of Theravada Buddhists see e.g. Gombrich 1971:255-258. On ethics in Mahāyāna cf. Chappell 1995, and Williams 1989: 6: "a good Buddhist . . . tries to adhere firmly and strictly to a renunciation of killing, stealing, sexual immorality, lying, and taking alcohol . . . Thus in spite of the considerable diversity in Buddhism there is a relative unity and stability of the moral code and in particular in the order of monks (and, in Mahayana countries, nuns)."

<sup>39</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that the non-injury of a cow has in this period become so important that Bhartṛhari (5th cent. C.E.) records that the killing of a cow at a sacrifice (*gavām ālambhaḥ*), just as drinking wine (*madyapānam*) at a sacrifice, has become outdated in his times (MBhD 3.12.28). The Aśokan edicts, reflecting a much earlier period (3rd century B.C.), still do not contain any indication that the cow is to be protected more against violence than other animals (cf. Alsdorf 1962:59). In Pāṇini's grammar (4th century B.C.), there is a rule to derive the word *goghna*, the meaning of which may be explicitized as: "he for whom a cow is slaughtered: a guest" (Pāṇini 3.4.73); the practice of slaughtering a cow for a respected guest is accepted in the earlier Dharmaśāstric literature. Cf. also the proper name Atithigva 'slaying cows for a guest' to which attention is drawn by Tull 1996:229.

<sup>40</sup> The complex of ideas underlying the argued defences of e.g. Kumārila (see below) is already reflected in Bhartṛhari's statement "Just as violence is nothing but a means for *dharma* ('righteousness, religious duty') in (sacrifices) such as the Aśvamedha" (*yathāśvamedhādiṣv abhyupāya eva hiṃsā dharmasya*, MBhD 1:31.6).

<sup>41</sup> Puṣyamitra's sacrifice became the subject of a grammatical example

Brahminical circles of this period, even the killing of human beings is again seen as a realistic possibility, as is clear from some statements by Bhartṛhari (MBhD 1:31.21 *sarvamedhe brāhmaṇavadhaḥ*) and commentaries on the Sāṅkhya-Kārikā (Sāṅkhya-Saptati-Vṛtti ad 2, *aśvamedhe mānuṣavadho 'pi*).<sup>42</sup> These references are evidence that there were in this new period Brahminical circles which found even human sacrifice (again) quite acceptable. In the present case the evidence is even more direct than before (when the sources did not point to a contemporaneous acceptance but to an acceptance in a period preceding the sources). The combination of highly esteemed and authoritative, inherited sources giving prescriptions for a human sacrifice, and the existence of certain circles in which these sacrifices are considered acceptable, create a situation in which an occasional occurrence of this sacrifice is not unlikely.

Inscriptions in which kings proudly claim to have performed a Puruṣamedha (or a Sarvamedha which includes a Puruṣamedha) are indeed found, but on their basis alone one cannot decide whether the human sacrifice was performed à la Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa (with

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(much discussed by scholars for its historical significance) in an important text of the (Brahminical) Pāṇinian tradition, viz. the Mahābhāṣya (Cardona 1976:263-266).

<sup>42</sup> Note that Bhartṛhari and the author of the Sāṅkhya-saptati-vṛtti explicitly speak of the *killing* of a human; they do not use the ritualistic euphemisms *ā-labh*, *saṁ-jñāpayati*, etc., of which especially the former is not entirely unambiguous (in the ŚB description of the Puruṣamedha, for instance, the human victims are set free after their formal *ā-lambha* 'taking hold of': ŚB 13.6.2). Also the Yukti-Dīpikā, on account of the expression *himsāvidhānāt* employed in this context, seems to refer to a real and not just a symbolic killing, when it supports its statement that there is impurity in rituals because they prescribe injury with a quotation from a Brāhmaṇa: "Let him sacrifice (*ā-labh*) a Brahmin" (cf. TB 3.4.1). It is further to be noted that Bhartṛhari, as a grammarian, is writing for a general Brahminical public (sometimes accommodating even Buddhist viewpoints in theoretical reflections on grammar). He shows awareness of changing ritual practice where the sacrifice of a cow is concerned (MBhD 3:12.28), but presents the sacrifice of a human as a real possibility. Finally, Bhartṛhari is generally quite loyal to Brahminical ritualism, and the same applies to a great extent also to the Sāṅkhya-authors (who say that their method is better without actually rejecting the sacrificial system as such). Hence, there is no reason to assume that their reference to 'real killings' would result from a strong anti-Brahmin or anti-ritualistic bias.

release of human victims), or à la Śāṅkhāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra and (later) Bhartṛhari (with actual killing). Even more frequent are inscriptions testifying to the performance of an Aśvamedha. Here there is no reason to doubt that a horse was actually killed in the sacrifice. Coins with on one side the image of the sacrificial horse further illustrate that the Aśvamedha in the period of these inscriptions was not just a priestly construct but a powerful symbol with, in a double sense, wide currency. An illustration of this 'currency' is presented in Plate II, which shows the front and reverse of a coin commemorating an Aśvamedha celebrated by Samudragupta, mid 4th century C.E. The front shows the horse and, probably, the sacrificial pole (*yūpa*); the reverse may be interpreted as the queen with a chowrie (*vidhavana*) for fanning the dead horse, and a pointed instrument (possibly the queen's golden *sūcī* 'needle'), as well as the word *aśvamedhaparākrama*.<sup>43</sup> The Aśvamedha is reported to have been performed as recently as the first half of the 18th century (by Sawai Jaisingh of Jaipur).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The main queen (*mahiṣī*) fans the dead horse with a golden fanning instrument (*vidhavana*), cf. BauŚS 15.29 (p. 233.15ff) and Dumont 1927:337. BauŚS prescribes the production of a golden *vidhavana* and three golden *dha-vitrāṇi*. The cloth in the queen's left hand may be the cloth which covered the dead horse, and the pointed object may represent the main queen's golden *sūcī* 'needle' (decorated), with which the way of the knife in it was indicated by her and her one hundred companions who also have golden needles (cf. BauŚS 15.30, p. 235.9f, and Dumont 1927:182, 339). The Rāmāyaṇa (Bālak. 13.26) speaks of *krpāṇas* (swords or daggers) being used by the main queen. The vestiges of a nimbus around the head of the queen (on other coins the king Samudragupta appears with nimbus) may suggest that she is idealized or even deified, perhaps as an incarnation of Śrī (or the figure represents Śrī directly: Raven 1994b:45-46). For a previous discussion of Gupta coins of the Aśvamedha-type similar to the one shown in Plate II: Raven 1994b:43-46; Altekar 1954:38-49, and cf. Plates IV and V in the same work. The historical reality of Samudragupta's Aśvamedhas is borne out by several pieces of evidence, cf. Bhandarkar 1981:35-42 and Raven 1994a:38 with note 2.95. The Aśvamedha-images form part of a series of Gupta coin images where "[i]t is not religion . . . but sovereignty that sets the tone" (Raven 1994b:55).

<sup>44</sup> Ramachandran 1952:28. On further evidence for Vedic rituals in earlier periods see, apart from the previous note on Samudragupta's Aśvamedhas, e.g. Kane III:1028f, Pathak 1960, Kashikar 1964, and Kashikar and Parpola 1983.



2.4 From the preceding it will be clear that with regard to the development of the ideal of 'non-violence' and the reality versus theoreticality of human sacrifices in Brahminical circles, some important historical distinctions are to be made which so far have been mostly neglected: We find indications of two distinct periods with relatively little embarrassment about violence, in which even human sacrifices were acceptable (even though perhaps rarely performed): A, the period of the pre-classical (Ṛg-Vedic?) Śrautaritual, and C, that of the post-classical period (after Jainism and Buddhism had become strong). These two periods are separated by an intermediate period B, in which there was an increased embarrassment about violence and a stronger rejection of human sacrifices. Period B is reflected in the majority of classical ritualistic texts, Brāhmaṇas and Śrauta-Sūtras, and early Upaniṣads. In the course of this period, Jainism and Buddhism originate and gain in strength.

To make this broad periodization open to refinement and amendment (according to social, religious, geographical, and subperiodic variations), a connection with datable 'landmarks' is important. For now, reference may be made to the already mentioned Aśokan edicts (3d cent. B.C.E.), which mark the end or final phase (in terms of the rejection of violence: the culmination) of period B, and Bhartṛhari's and Kumārila's statements (5th and 7th cent. C.E.), which are to be situated in period C.

Schematically:

Diagram I: Acceptability of sacrificial violence (SV), human sacrifice (HS) in Brahminical circles (main tendencies):

period	SV	HS	texts, e.g.	datable event
A	yes	yes	RV, some ŚS	
B	partly avoided	no	ŚB, most ŚS ChāndUp	ending some time after Aśokan edicts -3 C.E.
C	defended	yes	Bhartṛhari, Sāṃkhya-c. Kumārila	Bhart. +5 C.E., Kumārila +7 C.E.

2.5 The earliest serious Brahminical objections to the killing of animals in Vedic rituals can now be assigned to the middle period mentioned above, period B. This is the period of the classical ritualistic texts, a period which one may call late-Vedic and which partly overlaps with early Jainism and Buddhism. The objections are here not very strong, and the problems involved in this killing are philosophically not yet elaborated. We find them reflected in the already mentioned Chāndogya-Upaniṣad, in which non-violence or non-harming is referred to as a general, though not exceptionless, norm (ChāndUp 3.18.4 and 8.15), and which seems to evaluate rituals lower than 'the way of knowledge' (ChāndUp 5.10).

In this period we may also have to place the older Dharma-Sūtras<sup>45</sup> which, like the ChāndUp, give lists with virtues including 'non-harming'. Āpastamba-DhS (1.8.23.6) and Vasiṣṭha-DhS (4.4) give a list for all classes with non-harming (the term used in Āpastamba is *adroha* 'non-aggression') at a (non-prominent) later place in the list. Gautama has no *ahimsā* or *adroha* but mentions (8.23) compassion to all living beings (*dayā sarvabhūteṣu*) and forbearance (*kṣānti*) as the first two items in a list of good qualities of the soul. Baudhāyana-DhS (2.10.18.2-3) places *ahimsā* first in a list of vows for the ascetic (*saṁnyāsin*). In addition it gives a list of minor vows.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> On the date of the Dharma-Sūtras see now Olivelle 1993:101: "Unfortunately there is no scholarly consensus regarding their relative or absolute chronology," and the references to the discussions given in his note 81. Olivelle considers Gautama, Baudhāyana and Āpastamba to be the older ones. With regard to the latter two, which are placed at ca. 500-200 B.C.E. and 450-350 B.C.E. respectively by Kane, Olivelle thinks that "we shall not be far wrong in concluding that at least one of these documents must have been composed by the beginning of the fourth century B.C.E." (1993:102). Olivelle further thinks that Gautama is older than Baudhāyana (1993:83) and refers to his section 3.4, where, however, he does not adduce any evidence for this. The more sophisticated sūtra-style of Gautama (cf. Kangle 1968), and his heavier dependence on Mīmāṃsā-like principles of interpretation (cf. Olivelle 1993:83-86, and his note 39), rather speak for a later formulation of Gautama's Dharma-Sūtra than Baudhāyana's or Āpastamba's.

<sup>46</sup> The two lists in BauDhS 2.10.18.2-3 are: *ahimsā, satya, astainya, maithunasya varjana, tyāga* (five *vratas*); and *akrodha, guruśuśrūṣā, apramāda, śauca, āhāraśuddhi* (five *upavratas*).

Moreover, in a preceding passage in Baudhāyana (BauDhS 2.6.11.9-29) we find a division into four orders: the student, the householder, the hermit and the ascetic (*brahmacārin*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha*, *parivrājaka*). The passage is introduced and concluded with statements which show the disagreement of the author of BauDhS with this division. In this passage, much attention is paid to the hermit (he should follow the Vaikhānasa rules), and even more to the ascetic. One of the rules for the ascetic is that he should abstain from injuring living beings in word, thought and deed (2.6.11.23). The doctrine of the division into four orders is attributed to a Kapila, son of Prahlāda, who is further said to be Asura or Āsura (2.6.11.28). In older Vedic texts *asura* means 'divine or spiritual being' (cf. Ahura Mazda of the Avesta), but later on, from the Brāhmaṇa-texts onward, it means 'demon, enemy of the gods'. Kapila's epithet Asura/Āsura has here probably something to do with the rejection of the division into four orders by the author, although the name Kapila is also strongly associated with the notion of a special, spiritual being (ŚveUp 5.2). While in the Baudhāyana-DhS and Gautama-DhS the division into four orders is, as rightly pointed out by Olivelle (1993:83-94), not yet integrated into the exposition of Dharma, it is so in later Dharma-Sūtras such as Āpastamba and Vasiṣṭha.<sup>47</sup> The name of Kapila recurs in the Baudhāyana-Gṛhya-Sūtra, in the large part called Gṛhya-Śeṣa-Sūtra (cf. Gonda 1977:589). Here, a section is found which is called *kapila-saṁnyāsa-vidhi* 'Kapila's rules for renunciation' (4.16). One of the mantras to be pronounced by the candidate is: "Fearlessness to all living beings from my side, svāhā!" (*abhayaṁ sarvabhūtebhyo mattas svāhā*, BauGŚS 4.16.4). It is, of course, difficult to decide whether the section itself is old or just the association of rules for renunciation and Kapila. In any case, there is no indication of a dependence upon or influence from

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<sup>47</sup> Though Olivelle is right in maintaining that "Contrary to what many scholars assume, the structure of Gautama's works shows that the *āśrama* system was not yet integrated into the exposition of dharma" (1993:86), it is not likely that Gautama has given the long discussion of the division into four orders in chapter 3 only as something to be rejected in the last line. The author opposes some aspects of the exposition, but adopts it apparently for the sake of completeness. Cf. Houben forthc. b note 37.

Buddhist or Jaina ascetic ideals, so that the terminus post quem of these ascetic rules in the margins of Vedic ritualism may be just before Buddhism and Jainism originated or at least before they became strong.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> The precise relation between Brahminical, Jaina and Buddhist asceticism has been a matter of dispute for more than a century. After having shown the similarities between these three forms of asceticism, Jacobi (1884:xxix-xxx) gave three reasons why it is unlikely that the Brahmins borrowed their rules from the Jaina and/or Buddhists.

The first reason, that the order of the Brahmin ascetic, *Saṁnyāsin*, "makes part of the system of the four stages, or *Āśramas*, which, if not so old as Brahmanism itself, is at least much older than both Buddhism and Jainism," is to be rejected in the way it has been formulated in view of Olivelle's research which points to a comparatively late full integration of the *Āśrama*-system in Brahmanism (Olivelle 1993). The *Baudhāyana-Dharma-Sūtra* rules for ascetics, on which Jacobi bases himself, may still to a large extent predate a developed Buddhism and Jainism, even if they do not testify to an established four-*Āśrama*-system.

The second reason—"the Brahmanic ascetics were scattered all over India, while the Buddhists were confined, at least in the first two centuries of their church, to a small part of the country, and therefore could not have been imitated by all the *Saṁnyāsins*"—seems still plausible (if one reads "all over the North of the Indian subcontinent" instead of "all over India") in the light of the mobility of students and teachers of Vedas and *Upaniṣads* and of more 'marginal' groups like the *Vrātyas*, to which early Brahminical sources testify (cf. Heesterman 1962, Falk 1986, Witzel 1989).

Jacobi's third reason—"Gautama, the [Brahminical] lawgiver, was certainly older than the rise of Buddhism"—has not much value as this thesis is hardly provable. But this is followed by a more valuable observation which takes as starting point the possibility that the available Dharma-texts are *not* older than Buddhism: in that case "those [Brahminical] lawgivers are not likely to have largely borrowed from the Buddhists . . . They would certainly not have regarded laws as sacred which were evidently appropriated from heretics. On the other hand the Buddhists had no reason not to borrow from the *Brāhmins*, because they greatly respected the latter . . . Hence the Jainas and Buddhists use the word *Brāhmaṇa* as an honorific title . . ." (Jacobi 1884:xxx).

Both early Jaina and early Buddhist texts suggest the presence of already established ideals and forms of asceticism in the margins of, or in opposition to, Vedic ritualism (cf. Bronkhorst 1993a and b). These forms and ideals are generally speaking not invented but redefined by the *Mahāvīra* and the Buddha.

2.6 The next period in which we find serious Brahminical objections to the killing of animals, is precisely the period of the Brahminical reaction, and the defence of sacrificial violence by Brahmins, period C. The six orthodox Brahminical systems of philosophy—and certainly their classical formulations—originated mainly only in the first phase of this period, from the Aśokan edicts till around Bharṭṛhari's time. The emerging systems reflect, among other things, on the sources of valid knowledge (*pramāṇas*) which they recognize and on their mutual relations. Sāṃkhya thinkers attributed much value to *anumāna* or inference, which according to them could give knowledge on transcendental matters which even the Vedas could not provide. The lost Sāṃkhya-work the *Ṣaṣṭitantra* seems to have attributed an even more important place to *anumāna* than the later classical system of Īśvarakṛṣṇa (Frauwallner 1958). Mīmāṃsā, on the other hand, emphasizes the exclusive validity of the Veda with regard to matters of *dharma*. We find the strongest defence of Vedic orthodoxy, including the sacrificial system and the rejection of the universal ideal of 'non-violence', in late-classical Mīmāṃsā, 7th century C.E., in the works of Kumārila and Prabhākara. This has been discussed most recently by Wilhelm Halbfass,<sup>49</sup> who suggested, however, that Kumārila's defence of the Vedic Dharma against the claims of philosophical—that is, argumentative and universalizing—thinking, would be no philosophy in the real sense of the word.<sup>50</sup> In the 8th

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. Halbfass, 1988:325, 1991:32, 87ff, 111ff.

<sup>50</sup> See Halbfass 1988:325: "In a sense, its [i.e., Pūrvamīmāṃsā's] major 'philosophical' achievement is its method of shielding the Vedic dharma from the claims of philosophical, i.e., argumentative and universalizing thought . . . ." and note the quotation marks around 'philosophical'. On p. 32 of Halbfass 1991 the author asks: "Does Kumārila's philosophy play a merely secondary, instrumental role for the defense of the Veda and the dharma, or is his Vedic apologetics just an arena for the pursuit of truly philosophical questions?" but he does not want to take a decision: "A nonambiguous answer may neither be possible nor called for in this case." Nevertheless, he does not mention the defence of the *hiṃsā* in Vedic sacrifices among the possible "genuine contributions" to philosophy (he mentions only some "genuine contributions" to Epistemology and Philosophy of language, Halbfass 1991:32-33).

or 9th century, we find arguments similar to those of Mīmāṃsā against the criticism of the Veda in the works of Śaṅkara and later Vedāntins.<sup>51</sup>

## PART B. KILLING THE VICTIM: BRAHMINICAL OBJECTIONS AND APOLOGETICS

### 3. *A current of Brahminical objections: Mahābhārata, early Sāṃkhya and Yoga*

3.0 In this period of reaction and of the apologetics of ritual violence (till ca. the 8th and 9th century), we find also (or still) Brahminical voices which criticize, or take distance from, violence and especially the killing of animals in Vedic sacrifices. We find these voices mainly in three sources:

- (1) some philosophical parts of the Mahābhārata, the important South Asian Epic which one often thinks to have arisen between 200 before and 400 after the beginning of the C.E.<sup>52</sup>
- (2) classical Sāṃkhya: Īśvarakṛṣṇa's Sāṃkhya-Kārikā, probably originating ca. 4th century C.E., and most of its early commentaries;
- (3) the Yoga-Bhāṣya, often ascribed to some Vyāsa, possibly written around 500 C.E., and later commentaries on the Yoga-Sūtra.

3.1 In the Mahābhārata, especially in the part called Mokṣadharmā (chapters 174-365 of the 12th or Śānti-parvan), there are discussions and stories in which it is asked to what extent violence and killing in Vedic rituals are good or bad. The philosophical parts of the Mokṣadharmā-section have already been studied and

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<sup>51</sup> Halbfass thinks that Śaṅkara is in this respect not directly indebted to Kumārila—though he was probably familiar with his work—but rather continues a “tradition already well-established in Uttaramīmāṃsā [Vedānta] itself” (Halbfass 1991:93).

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Nakamura 1983:298: “it is supposed that it finally attained its present form around 200-400 A.D.”

translated by Paul Deussen (1906) almost a century ago, and after this they have been discussed several times, now also in an article by Peter Schreiner (1979) on non-violence and the prohibition to kill in Hinduism.<sup>53</sup> In the moral stories of these parts there is a, for us, very interesting character whose name is Kapila, and who criticizes the Vedas because they incite to acts of violence (MBhār 12.260-263). This Kapila emphasizes that he does not censure the Vedas, but he explains extensively that non-harming is higher than sacrificial violence. He praises world renunciation (MBhār 12.261), but also allows a spiritual life in the order of the householder, suggesting that one should perform only those sacrifices which do not entail the killing of a living being.<sup>54</sup> The section also contains a more general argument against sacrificial violence, namely in an earlier statement placed in the mouth of Bhīṣma: one should not do to someone else what he himself would not like to experience from others. The statement is equivalent to the well-known 'Golden Rule' which occurs in one form or the other in so many cultures (cf. Singer 1992 and references):

*yad anyair vihitam necched ātmānam karma pūruṣaḥ |  
na tat pareṣu kurvīta jñānam apriyam ātmanaḥ ||*

That deed which a man does not wish others to do to him (does not wish to be done by others to him), that he should not do to others, knowing that it is disagreeable to himself. (MBhār 12.251.19)

This is explicitly applied to the problem of killing:

*jīvitum yaḥ svayam cecchet katham so 'nyam praghātayet |  
yad yad ātmana iccheta tat parasyāpi cintayet ||*

And he who himself likes to live, how could he kill someone else? Whatever one would wish for oneself, one should take care of that very same thing also for the other. (MBhār 12.251.21)

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<sup>53</sup> Also Alsdorf 1962 discusses some relevant sections; Frauwallner 1992 deals with other sections of the Mokṣadharma not directly relevant to our theme.

<sup>54</sup> MBhār 12.261.19. The rituals mentioned are the Darśa and Paurṇamāsa, Agnihotra, and the Cāturmāsya.

3.2 I now turn to classical Sāṃkhya, which claims a certain Kapila as its founder.<sup>55</sup> In the first line of the second verse of the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā it is said:

*drṣṭavad ānuśravikaṃ sa hy aviśuddhi-kṣaya-atīśaya-yuktaṃ |*  
 What is prescribed in the sacred tradition is like the perceptible  
 [means to overcome suffering]: for it is [likewise] connected with  
 impurity, decay [of the results] and gradation. . . .  
 (Sāṃkhya-Kārikā 2ab)

In other words, the Vedic tradition is said to be lacking in good instruments to fully and definitively overcome the threefold suffering of life.<sup>56</sup> The reason for this is that these traditional instruments—namely, the Vedic sacrifices—are connected with *aviśuddhi* ‘impurity’, *kṣaya* ‘decay’, and *atīśaya* ‘gradation’. This criticism of the Vedic sacrifices should highlight the value of the Sāṃkhya-doctrine which overcomes the threefold suffering of life without having these drawbacks attached to it. At present, the *aviśuddhi*, the impurity of the Vedic sacrifices is of interest to us. The Sāṃkhya-Saptati-Vṛtti, estimated to be one of the oldest commentaries on the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā, explains that the Vedic sacrifices are impure because they are based on the killing of animals and humans:

*aviśuddhi- . . . iti | katham iti cet: tiryagyoni-mānuṣavadhāśrayāt |*  
*. . . [agniṣṭome] tāvat paśuvadho 'śvamedhe mānuṣavadho 'pi |*<sup>57</sup>  
 [On the word] “impurity . . . ” [in Sāṃkhya-Kārikā 2]: If someone  
 asks: “why [is there impurity in the sacrifice]?” the answer is: On ac-  
 count of the killing of animals and humans. . . . First, there is the

<sup>55</sup> On Kapila cf. Larson & Bhattacharya 1987:107ff (plus further references), and recently Bronkhorst 1993:66ff.

<sup>56</sup> Commentaries explain this as *ādhyātmika* ‘internal (both bodily and mental)’ suffering; *ādhibhautika* ‘natural’ suffering (e.g. caused by men and animals); and *ādhidāivika* ‘divine’ suffering (e.g. caused by forces of nature such as wind and thunder, or by possession by spirits).

<sup>57</sup> This is followed by a partly quite corrupt passage with citations pertaining to the killing of humans and animals (Solomon 1973a:7.15-8.13). Some of these citations are also found in other Sāṃkhya-commentaries (e.g. Sāṃkhya-vṛtti, see below).



killing of animals [in the Agniṣṭoma]; and in the Aśvamedha there is also the killing of a human.<sup>58</sup>

(Sāṃkhya-Saptati-Vṛtti on kārikā 2)

Other old commentaries give similar explanations of the *aviśuddhi* which would stick to the Vedic sacrifices as instruments to overcome suffering; the Sāṃkhya-Vṛtti first cites a verse (also cited in the Sāṃkhya-Saptati-Vṛtti) according to which 597 animals are killed on the middle offering day of the Aśvamedha (Solomon 1973b:5.21-23), and next a (textually problematic) verse which should illustrate that the prescripts of the Veda are mixed with bad acts and hence stained by impurity (*pāpakarmaṇā miśrībhāvāt aviśuddhiyuktaḥ vedavidhiḥ*, Solomon 1973b:6.4); the Suvarṇa-Saptati, preserved only in a Chinese translation, mentions among other things the great number of animals to be killed at an Aśvamedha (Sastri 1944:4); the Gauḍapāda-Bhāṣya says that the Veda has impurity attached to it on account of the killing of animals

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<sup>58</sup> This early statement that a human being is offered at the Aśvamedha does probably not refer to Weber's descendant of Atri on whose head a libation is to be poured at the concluding bath of the Aśvamedha (Weber 1864:62-64). It has rather something to do with the mention of human victims (*puruṣī*, explained by the commentators as an elliptic dual: 'a man and a woman', not 'two human females' as Eggeling understands) among the domestic animals to be offered (apart from the main victim, the horse) in the Aśvamedha (TS 5.6.21). Scholars have been unwilling to accept what this passage obviously implies (e.g. Keith on TS 5.6.21; Eggeling 1900:xxviii note 1), even though the adhortation in TB 3.9.8.3 to set free the man and the wild animals makes only sense if it refers to the preceding statement (TB 3.9.8.1-2) that a man is offered; Sāyaṇa takes the latter as a reference precisely to the enumeration of TS 5.6.21. The TB-passage urging to set free the man and the wild animals (which contains *ahiṃsā* in a late 'active' sense) may be suspected to be a later (but pre-Sāyaṇa) addition, as I will argue elsewhere (Houben in prep., b). Since the classical Aśvamedha contains the Agnicayana which originally may have involved a human sacrifice as well, the reference to the human sacrifice in the Aśvamedha could be to this one; yet, this is not so likely because in that case the author would probably have mentioned the Agnicayana directly.

(*paśughātāt*), and cites the verse (similar to the one in the Sāṃkhya-Vṛtti and Sāṃkhya-Saptati-Vṛtti) on the 597 animals to be killed at the Aśvamedha (Mainkar 1972:40).

Somewhat later than these commentaries, the Sāṃkhya-Tattva-Kaumudī of Vācaspati Miśra (9th century) gives a more sophisticated discussion of the alleged impurity of the sacrifice. It anticipates the objection that the general rule not to kill any living being is set aside by the specific rule that one should immolate the sacrificial animal. It is denied, however, that this applies in this case: a specific rule sets aside a general rule only when there is a conflict between the two, and with regard to the infliction of injury at a sacrifice there is no conflict at all: the rule that one should not kill declares that killing has a bad effect; the rule that one should immolate the victim only states that the immolation helps in the realization of the sacrifice, but it does not deny at the same time that it has a bad effect, as otherwise the statement would express two different things.<sup>59</sup> Quite different are the very sophisticated arguments of the Yukti-Dīpikā (6th century?), which occupies a special place among the older commentaries; we will return to it later on (section 4.4).

From these statements on the shortcomings of Vedic sacrifices it is clear that the killing of animals at this occasion is considered something bad (cf. *pāpakarmaṇā miśrībhāvāt* of the Sāṃkhya-Vṛtti). With this the place of this rejection in the entire system, in which final liberation is based on an insight in reality (as understood by the Sāṃkhya-thinkers), is not yet clear. Nor has it become clear, more generally, which place is attributed in the system to the performance of good or bad deeds (and to *dharma* 'virtue, righteousness' in contradistinction to *adharma* 'unrighteousness'). When the commentaries explain *dharma* at another place (SK 23), they give a list of *yamas* 'abstentions' beginning with *ahiṃsā*, and a list of *niyamas* 'observances' (abstention of anger, obedience to the teacher, etc.).<sup>60</sup> The YD-author gives here his view on the

<sup>59</sup> According to the Mīmāṃsā rules of interpretation, a single statement should have a single meaning or intention; if not, the statement splits: there are two or more statements; but an interpretation which accepts a single statement is generally preferable (cf. MS 2.1.46f and commentaries).

<sup>60</sup> Thus, SSV and SV on SK 23 mention *ahiṃsā*, *asteya*, *brahmacarya*, *satya* and *avyavahāra* as *yamas*, and *akrodha*, *guruśuśrūṣā*, *śauca*,

place of *dharma* in the entire system. Having made a distinction between *dharma* as the performance of prescribed acts (namely the abstentions and observances), and *dharma* as a disposition which both gives experiences in Brahmā's heaven etc. and is helpful for knowledge etc., he says:<sup>61</sup>

On the basis of the practice of these (namely, the abstentions and observances) without interruption, the *sattva-dharma* of the ascetic, when it is enhanced in such a way, becomes a disposition, and it creates an increase of knowledge and other forms. This is the first limb—a step (in a staircase or series of steps)—of elevation and the supreme aim. And that ascetic who is established in this [limb], becomes qualified for the practice of the other limbs.

Although one may perceive a contrast between a possible concern with 'non-harming' and the ultimate aim of Sāṅkhya consisting in personal liberation through insight, the prominent place of 'non-harming' at least in the first limb of the Sāṅkhyan system is obvious.

The Sāṅkhya-commentaries place 'non-harming' (*ahiṃsā*) consistently at the first place in the list, just as some of the Dharma-Sūtras (see above). The lists of abstentions and observances are in fact quite similar to the list of vows and the list of minor vows respectively for the ascetic as given in Baudhāyana-DhS (see above). Sāṅkhya's emphasis on 'non-harming' goes well with a statement in the Jaina-text Āvaśyakaniryukti according to which "compassion

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*āhārālāghava* and *apramāda* as *niyamas*. YD has the same *niyamas*, but gives a slightly different list of *yamas*: *ahiṃsā*, *satya*, *asteya*, *akalkatā*, *brahmacarya*. The different lists of the Yoga-Sūtra (2.30: *ahiṃsā*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacarya*, *aparigraha*; and 32: *śauca*, *saṁtoṣa*, *tapas*, *svādhyāya*, *īśvarapraṇidhāna*) are adopted in later Sāṅkhya commentaries such as the Gaudapāda-Bhāṣya and Jayamaṅgalā (cf. Solomon 1974:146f).

<sup>61</sup> *eteṣāṃ avilopenānuṣṭhānād yater evaṁvidhottaraṇe sattvadharmā āśayatāṃ pratipadyate, yo jñānādīnāṃ rūpāṇāṃ āpyāyanāṃ karoti | etad abhyudaya-niḥśreyasayoḥ sopāyanabhūtaṃ prathamāṃ parva | yatrāyam avasthito yatir itareṣāṃ parvaṇāṃ anuṣṭhāne yogyo bhavati |* YD 95.3-6 / 192.2-6. Note: Only when most of this article had already been written the Wezler & Motegi edition became available to me. The first group of digits refers to page and line-no. of Pandeya's edition, the second to that of Wezler and Motegi.

towards animals (*pāṇiṇaṁ dayā*) has been the quintessence of Kapila's doctrine" (Garbe 1892:X, note 1).<sup>62</sup>

In spite of this emphasis on 'non-harming', it does not seem that Vedic rituals are in Sāṁkhya for that reason entirely discarded (except by the renouncer). They are only 'superseded' by the better means of transcending the three-fold suffering of life (cf. *śreyān* in SK 2). In Vācaspati Miśra's Sāṁkhya-Tattva-Kaumudī on SK 2, we find a quotation attributed to the early Sāṁkhya-teacher Pañcaśikha (Larson & Bhattacharya 1987:113-123), which, according to Vācaspati's interpretation, admits that there is some demerit connected with Vedic ritual. But this demerit is much smaller than the merit resulting from it (STK on SK 2).

3.3 Also in the Yoga-Bhāṣya violence against living beings is consistently rejected. Commenting on Yoga-Sūtra 2.34, the author of the Bhāṣya distinguishes different kinds of violence on the basis of the motivation of the actor. Apart from greed and anger he mentions delusion, and illustrates it with the conviction: "There will be (religious) merit for me":

*tatra hiṁsā tāvat — . . . lobhena māṁsacarmārthena, krodhenāpakṛtam aneneti, mohena dharmo me bhaviṣyatīti*

Here first injury [is being explained in the sūtra and further by us:]  
 . . . [injury takes place] on account of greed: [for instance if one inflicts injury] for the sake of meat and skin; on account of anger: [for instance if one says:] "I have been ill-treated by this person"; on account of delusion: [for instance if one thinks:] "There will be (religious) merit for me." (YBh on YS 2.34)

<sup>62</sup> Mention may here also be made of chapter 8 in the Uttarādhyayana-Sūtra which consists of a series of verses attributed to a certain Kapila and praising renunciation and harmlessness. Except for the renunciation and harmlessness there is nothing that hints at the later Sāṁkhya-doctrines. If at all we have here a reflection of the same person as the one claimed as founder of Sāṁkhya, it is a very vague one. See Larson & Bhattacharya 1987:108f for this and other (vague and/or late) references to Kapila. Śaṁkara made a distinction between at least two Kapila's: the founder of the Sāṁkhya-system and "another Kapila, viz. the one who burned the sons of Sagara and had the surname Vāsudeva" (*anyasya ca kapilasya sagaraputrāṇāṁ prataptur vāsudevanāmaḥ*, Śaṁkara on BrS 2.1.1, tr. Thibaut).

Non-harming appears as a quite positive value in the Yoga-system. The Yoga-Sūtra even predicts a clearly noticeable effect if someone reaches perfection in 'non-harming': "When he (the yoga-practitioner) is well-established in non-harming, enmity is given up in his environment" (*ahiṃsā-pratiṣṭhāyām tat-saṃnidhau vaira-tyāgaḥ*, YS 2.35). According to the Yoga-Bhāṣya this would affect all living beings, and later commentaries explain that even permanent enemies like the mouse and the cat give up their enmity. Poetical works like the Raghuvamśa and Kirātārjunīya picture scenes with wild animals sitting at peace near sages and in their hermitages<sup>63</sup> which call to mind the Biblical predictions of the advent of the Messiah (Jesaja 11 and 65: the wolf and the lamb grazing together).

In any case it is clear that the Yoga-practitioner is expected to avoid inflicting injury under all circumstances. Nevertheless, the author of the Yoga-Bhāṣya does not, for that reason, fully reject the Vedic rituals. Thus, when explaining YS 2.13 on the long-term workings of the dispositions of actions (*karma*), the Yoga-Bhāṣya gives a quotation which seems a more complete version of the (later) quotation in the Sāṃkhya-Tattva-Kaumudī mentioned above (section 3.2). Vācaspati Miśra attributes the quoted passage again to Pañcaśikha. It is admitted that there is some demerit connected with Vedic ritual, but this demerit is said to be much smaller than the merit resulting from it.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. Kirātārjunīya 2.55: "Calming even the wild animals by his gentle looks, spreading a blazing radiance around which burns away guilt, (but yet) can be gazed at [the sage, viz. the son of Parāśara, was seen by the king, viz. Yudhiṣṭhira]" (translation and interpretation following Roodbergen 1984:143); also cf. Raghuvamśa 13.50, 14.79.

<sup>64</sup> The full quotation in the Yoga-Bhāṣya on YS 2.13 is:  
*yatredam uktam — syāt svalpaḥ saṃkaraḥ saparihāraḥ sapratyavamaṣaḥ,  
kuśalasya nāpakarṣāyālam | kasmāt? kuśalaṃ hi me bahv anyad asti yatrāyam  
āvāpaṃ gataḥ sarge 'py apakarṣam alpaṃ kariṣyati iti.*

"With regard to which it has been said: There may indeed be a slight admixture [of demerit, in a sacrifice], [but] it has a remedy and there is endurance for it: it is not capable of taking away the happiness. Why? Much happiness I have indeed on the other side, in which that [admixture of demerit] when inserted will bring about only a small detraction even in heaven." For this and other (alleged) quotations from Pañcaśikha see Larson & Bhattacharya 1987:117-121 and references given there.

Yoga is traditionally considered to be a separate philosophical system which is closely related to Sāṃkhya. It is good to be aware how close this tie is. The quotation from, presumably, a Sāṃkhya-teacher (whether or not he is correctly identified as Pañcaśikha) is one indication of the closeness of this relation which approaches an indistinguishable identity. Another indication: Helārāja (ca. 10th century) cites as evidence for the Sāṃkhya-view on a certain topic a passage which is identical with part of the Yoga-Bhāṣya on YS 2.19.<sup>65</sup> And further, commenting on a sūtra which discusses the omniscience of God (Īśvara) (YS 1.25), the Yoga-Bhāṣya quotes a line according to which “The First Knower, assuming a created mind through compassion, the Exalted, the Supreme Sage, unto Āsuri who desired to know, declared this doctrine” (tr. adapted from Woods 1914:56). This line, again attributed to Pañcaśikha by Vācaspati Miśra, apparently refers to Kapila, the reputed founder of the Sāṃkhya-system, as can be inferred from “Supreme Sage” (*paramarṣi*), a frequent epithet of Sāṃkhya-teachers and especially Kapila; and from the name of his pupil, Āsuri, who is the well-known pupil of Kapila (cf. SK 70).<sup>66</sup>

3.4 What the three mentioned sources have to offer in terms of a criticism of Vedic rituals is certainly meagre, when they are considered in isolation. Taken together, however, they point to a not entirely insignificant current—apparently closely connected with proto- and classical Sāṃkhya—which allowed a qualified criticism on Vedic rituals on the basis of rational arguments, but which was nevertheless closely related to (or eager to be accepted by) Brahminism. In the light of our observations on the preceding periods (A and B), it can now be said that this current continues or is linked with an earlier and broader South Asian tendency to non-violence, which was also reflected in early Brahminism, especially in Brahminical asceticism connected with the name of Kapila.

Scholars have searched for a basic continuity in Sāṃkhya, which would connect the classical system with earlier manifestations and

<sup>65</sup> Helārāja on VP 3.1.34, VP IIIa:42.5-10.

<sup>66</sup> Vācaspati Miśra in his commentary on the Yoga-Bhāṣya considers this, again, a fragment of the Sāṃkhya-teacher Pañcaśikha; he also identifies the First Knower with Kapila (cf. Woods 1914:56 note 2 and ref. to Garbe given there). On this line cf. also Wezler 1970 and Bronkhorst 1985.

traces of Sāṃkhya. They searched for this continuity in theoretical doctrines (cosmogonic and psychological), but did not find it there.<sup>67</sup> Here we have found such a continuity, not in theoretical doctrine, but in ethical doctrine or ethical attitude. Parallel with this are the references to a Kapila defending the status of the renouncer (who should be 'non-violent') in Brahminical circles. These indications link not only later Sāṃkhya with the preceding pre- and proto-Sāṃkhya (from Mahābhārata to Baudhāyana-Dharma-Sūtra, cf. resp. section 3.1 and 2.5), but also Sāṃkhya with Yoga. Traces of theoretical sophistication (and hence a basis to speak of the beginnings of a philosophy) appear only at a later stage in the development (reflected in e.g. the Mahābhārata).

3.5 There is in addition some dispersed material, which was so far difficult to attribute to the one or the other philosophical school or current. In Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya we find, for instance, a problematic verse which is found back later on in the work of Kumārila and Jayanta Bhaṭṭa. These two authors ascribe it, however, to the descendant of Pārāśara, resp. Vyāsa.<sup>68</sup> The verse can now be associated very well with the current mentioned above.

*idaṃ punyam idaṃ pāpam ity etasmin padadvaye |  
ācandālanuṣyānām alpaṃ śāstraprayojanam ||*

With regard to these two topics: "this is good" [and] "this is bad," the traditional texts are but of little use to people, including 'outcasts'. (VP 1.40)

<sup>67</sup> One may cf. the (somewhat exaggerated) comment of Larson & Bhattacharya 1987:116-117 on some reconstructions: "Dasgupta, Frauwallner, Johnston, van Buitenen, and others have all attempted to outline various historic stages in this Proto-Sāṃkhya and Proto-Yoga material . . . All such efforts to delineate a precise historical sequence, although ingenious, must nevertheless be judged to have failed . . ."

<sup>68</sup> Kumārila, in the second verse of his Śloka-Vārttika on the Autpattika-sūtra (Mīmāṃsā-Sūtra 1.1.5) announces a verse of Pārāśarya and gives then the verse which is identical to VP 1.40. Kumārila's commentator Pārthasārathi Miśra explains the author's name as Vyāsa. Jayanta Bhaṭṭa (we don't know whether he had a different source apart from Kumārila) cites the verse as from Vyāsa (NM p. 612). Abhinavagupta cites the verse as from 'Muni', which may also refer to Vyāsa (Abhyankar & Limaye 1965:204).

A precise interpretation of the verse is difficult, because we do not know its original context (since there are reasons to believe that also Bhartṛhari quoted it from some source). It can be said, however, that the verse emphasizes that with regard to questions of what is good and what is bad, that is to say, with regard to moral and ethical questions, the traditional texts are but of little use to people, including outcasts. In any case it seems to express a restriction of the authority of the Vedas with regard to ethical questions, a restriction which is endorsed among the Brahminical schools especially in Sāṃkhya and Yoga.<sup>69</sup> The unity of humanity which we find expressed in this verse is hardly ever mentioned or emphasized in ancient texts, except in Sāṃkhya.<sup>70</sup> Both “the descendant of Parāśara” and “Vyāsa” as author of this verse would link it with the above-mentioned sources.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>69</sup> According to the context in the Vākyapadīya (and the Vṛtti on it), this verse should be interpreted in such a way, that people like to follow the example of great personalities and for this reason do not need the sacred books so much. In the Mahābhārata we also find other places where the importance of the example of great personalities as well as the limited value of the Vedas is emphasized, namely in the Bhagavad-Gītā (BhG 2.42-46; 3.21), a text which is quite important for proto-Sāṃkhya.

<sup>70</sup> SK 53: *aṣṭavikalpo daivas tairyagyonāś ca pañcadhā bhavati | mānুষyaś caikavidhaḥ samāsato bhautikaḥ sargaḥ*. “The divine [creation] (the gods) is of eight kinds; the animal [creation] (the animals) is fivefold; the human [creation] (men, humanity) is unitary; briefly, [this is the exposition of] the material creation.” The Sāṃkhya-Saptati-Vṛtti (Solomon 1973a:68) explicitly includes the ‘outcast’ (*cāṇḍāla* or *caṇḍāla*) who was also mentioned in the verse attributed to Vyāsa/Parāśara: *mānুষyaś caikavidhas tulyalīṅgatvād brāhmaṇādiś cāṇḍālāntaḥ*. YD (137.27) explains that humanity is unitary “because no other ‘class’ (*jāti*) is feasible”; but later on (137.31) it mentions *brāhmaṇa*, *ksatriya*, *viṣ* and *śūdra* as subdivisions (*bheda*).

Other texts (Mīmāṃsā, Dharma-Sūtras, Lawbooks) usually seem to emphasize division rather than unity. Chāndogya-Upaniṣad 5.10.7 predicts birth as a Brahmin, Kṣatriya, or Vaiśya to those of good conduct, and birth as a dog, swine or *cāṇḍāla* to those of bad conduct. According to Kumārila *mlecchas* would never have an “outcry of the heart” in doing any action (ŚIV on MS 1.1.2, 247f), i.e. they would have no protesting “voice of conscience” when doing some bad deed (Halbfass 1991:96).

<sup>71</sup> Vyāsa is considered to be a descendant of Parāśara, and Jayanta may have intended the same author as Kumārila, namely the reputed author of the Mahābhārata (and/or the reputed author of the Yoga-Bhāṣya?). There is also



#### 4. *Rejection of the objections: Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta*

4.0 Finally there is, apart from the three mentioned sources and the dispersed material such as the verse discussed in section 3.5, yet another reason to believe that the current about which we are speaking was not entirely insignificant in early Brahmanism: namely, the vehemence with which authors like Kumārila, Prabhākara, and Śaṅkara tried to refute the Sāṃkhyas and their relatively independent stance vis-à-vis the Vedas.

4.1 Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, like Śabara who commented on MS 1.1.2 before him, considers sacrifices such as the Śyena which aim at the death of an enemy, as demeritorious (*adharma*). But Kumārila pays much more attention to a problem entirely neglected by his predecessor Śabara: the killing of an animal in a sacrifice which as a whole does not aim at the death of any living being. Among the major points in Kumārila's discussion<sup>72</sup> are his rejection of the view that the pain of the slaughtered animal would revert to the slaughterer; and more generally his rejection of any argumentative reasoning or appeal to perception as having a valid bearing on matters of *dharma*, which Mīmāṃsā defines as that which is prescribed in the Veda.<sup>73</sup> Specifically, the view that giving pleasure to others is *dharma* and causing pain is *adharma* is rejected. After all, this would make sexual intercourse with one's guru's wife (severely censured in Brahminical *dharma*-texts) an act of *dharma*. Such a definition would also not do with regard to acts such as recitation and drinking alcohol, in which no 'beneficiary' or 'victim' can be directly identified, but which are generally acknowledged to be meritorious and demeritorious respectively (v. 236f, 244f). Moreover, no act is *dharma* or *adharma* in and by itself, but it all depends upon the circumstances under which the act

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another Sāṃkhya-oriented author who is considered to be a descendant of Parāśara, namely Pañcāsikha (Larson & Bhattacharya 1987:113).

<sup>72</sup> ŚIV on MS 1.1.2, vv. 201ff; Halbfass 1991:89ff.

<sup>73</sup> MS 1.1.2: *codanā-lakṣaṇo 'rtho dharmah* "dharma is the purpose (human aim or good) which is indicated by a (Vedic) injunction." Śabara and Kumārila consider certain ways of reading the sūtra which need not concern us here.

is performed (and which are specified in the Vedic injunctions). Just as the act of eating has quite different capacities for healthy and unhealthy people, like that an act of violence, even if it is similar in form, is quite different depending on whether it is part of a sacrifice or not.<sup>74</sup> Following Śabara, Kumārila regards the employment of the Śyena sacrifice to kill a person as an instance of *adharma*, but emphasizes that this is not on account of some generally valid moral principle, but merely because authoritative texts give a general prohibition against injuring others.<sup>75</sup> The general rule is set aside (and hence in no way applicable) in the specific ‘intra-sacrificial’ situations where the authoritative texts enjoin the killing of an animal.<sup>76</sup> Although Kumārila does not mention his opponents by name, they have here been identified primarily as Sāṃkhyas.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup> ŚIV vv. 257f; a similar idea was already briefly expressed by Bhartṛhari, MBhD 1:31.6 (cf. above, section 2.3 on MBhD 1.31.21).

<sup>75</sup> It is generally accepted by Kumārila and his partners in discussion that there is a Vedic prohibition to injure others. The expression which substantiates the claim of Vedic authority for this prohibition is *na* or *mā hiṃsyāt sarvabhūtāni* (or *sarvā bhūtāni*, with Vedic n.pl. ending in *sarvā*) (e.g. STK on SK 2; Uṇveka on ŚIV 229-230 on MS 1.1.2, 249ff; Śaṅkara on BS 3.1.25). It is symptomatic that even those authors who must have been quite eager to find it (viz. Sāṃkhya and Yoga authors rejecting sacrificial violence), did not come across any other authoritative quotation. Apparently, not only modern scholars have had difficulty in finding ideas corresponding to the later ideal of *ahiṃsā* in older Vedic sources. What is more, the stereotyped phrase which is accepted as Vedic is not found in that form in any available Vedic text. In fact, it may be nothing but a (syntactically defensible) adaptation of the well-known and already discussed phrase in the ChāndUp 8.15: *ahiṃsan sarvabhūtāni* . . . This would confirm the key position which the ChāndUp seems to occupy within period B: it was one of the last texts still generally accepted as Vedic (authoritative *śruti*), and at the same time the first and only one already clearly reflecting the emerging ideal of *ahiṃsā*.

<sup>76</sup> Although Kumārila does not mention the principle of the specific rule (*apavāda*) setting aside the general one (*utsarga*) explicitly, this is implied by the two references in vv. 231-232 (one unidentified reference and one to MS 6.6.2) according to Kumārila’s commentators (Uṇveka and Pārthasārathi Miśra).

<sup>77</sup> Halbfass 1991:116 note 11: “Sāṃkhya ideas seem to be the main target of Kumārila’s argumentation in this section.” Uṇveka on ŚIV on MS 1.1.2, 231f; the objection in 249ff Uṇveka attributes specifically to the Sāṃkhya-

4.2 Another Mīmāṃsā-teacher, Prabhākara—most probably Kumārila’s elder contemporary—dealt with the problem in a different way. Why does the injunction “one should not kill living beings” prohibit the performance of a Vedic sacrifice which aims at killing an enemy, whereas it does not prohibit the killing of an animal during a sacrifice which aims at the obtainment of heaven by the sacrificer? *adhikāragato ’yaṁ pratiṣedhaḥ puruṣārthaś ca; tasmād abhicārasyānarthatām prātipādayituṁ kṣamaḥ, na agniṣomīyādeḥ, kratvarthatvāt* (Bṛhatī on MS 1.1.2). This may be paraphrased as: The prohibition applies to the sacrificing man and his free choice; hence, it is able to express that *abhicāra* (performing a sacrifice which aims at the killing of an enemy) is bad, but it cannot express that the sacrificial animal serves no good goal, since the latter is there for completing the sacrifice.

This way of reasoning was echoed by later authors such as Vācaspati Miśra in his commentary Bhāmatī on Brahma-Sūtra 3.1.25, and attacked and rejected in favour of a more general application of the prohibition “one should not kill” by the Vedāntin Appayya-Dīkṣita (16th-17th century) and the grammarian Nāgeśa (17th-18th century).<sup>78</sup>

4.3 Like Kumārila and Prabhākara, Śaṅkara (born in Kerala, 8th century(?)) rejects the view that Vedic ritual would be impure on account of the infliction of injury (*hiṁsā*) prescribed in it, by pointing out that what is enjoined by the sacred texts simply cannot be impure or wrong. Śaṅkara’s way of arguing is closest to that of Kumārila. He defends the animal sacrifice under Brahma-Sūtra 3.1.25. The BS-passage to which this sūtra belongs is a discussion of authoritative passages such as ChāndUp 5.10, which describe the rise of the souls to the world of the fathers, and their subsequent descent after their time to stay in the world of the fathers and on the moon is over. BS 3.1.24 emphasizes that the returning souls do not really incarnate as rice etc. but merely get associated with these. According to the next sūtra a statement by an objector on ‘impurity’ is answered with a reference to scriptural authority:

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teacher Mādhava (cf. Halbfass 1991:116 note 16).

<sup>78</sup> For some relevant quotations see Gune 1994:154-156.

*aśuddham iti cen: na, śabdāt.*

If it is said "it is impure" [we say]: no, on account of the verbal testimony (of the sacred texts). (BS 3.1.25)

According to Śaṅkara the statement intended in "it is impure" is that sacrifices would be impure on account of the infliction of injury; this infliction of injury in sacrifices leads to demerit, and for this reason the souls of those who performed rituals go through a phase in which they are rice etc., so that they can experience the unpleasant results which suit the bad aspect of the killing of animals. The answer to be given, according to Śaṅkara, to such a statement is:

On the basis of the sacred text it is ascertained that the Jyotiṣṭoma, which accepts injuring etc., is *dharma*; [then] how can one say that [this Jyotiṣṭoma and other sacrifices involving injuring an animal] is impure?<sup>79</sup>

The principle indirectly referred to by Kumārila is specifically mentioned by Śaṅkara: the general rule not to injure is set aside (and hence in no way applicable) with regard to the specific 'intra-sacrificial' slaughter of an animal.<sup>80</sup>

The same position is defended in a different way in the commentary on the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad 5.10.6:

And it cannot be inferred that Vedic rites are the cause of both [merit and demerit] on the ground that they involve inflicting injury, since the infliction of injury is enjoined by the sacred texts. On the basis of the revealed text (śruti): "(He, who) . . . does not harm any living being, except at sacred (sacrificial) places . . .," it is accepted that the infliction of injury which is enjoined by the sacred texts does not lead to demerit.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> *śāstrāc ca hiṃsānugrahādyātmako jyotiṣṭomo dharma ity avadhāritam, sa katham aśuddha iti śakyate vaktum ?* BSBh on 3.1.25.

<sup>80</sup> The applicability of this principle on the problem of the killing of a sacrificial animal is denied by Vācaspati Miśra (9th cent.), as we have seen above (section 3.2). But the latter's view that a prescript in a sacred text would lead to evil is not likely to have found wide acceptance among Mīmāṃsakas, Vedāntists, and orthodox Brahmins in general.

<sup>81</sup> *na ca vaidikānām karmaṇām hiṃsāyuktatvenobhayahetutvaṃ śakyam*

Śaṅkara next accepts, for the sake of the discussion, the view that inflicting injury in Vedic rites does lead to demerit; but then, he emphasizes, it can be removed:

Even if one would accept that it leads to demerit: because it is possible to remove this [demerit] by means of mantras—just as poison etc. [is removed by mantras]—the Vedic rites need not produce the effect of suffering; just as swallowing poison with a mantra [need not produce the effect of suffering].<sup>82</sup>

Again like Kumārila, Śaṅkara does not identify his opponents explicitly either in ChāndUpBh on 5.10.6 or in BSBh on 3.1.25. Elsewhere, however, with reference to basic tenets of Vedānta (such as the rejection of a plurality of selves and acceptance of the single universal Self which is Brahman) he is very explicit about them: they are the Sāṅkhyas. According to Brahma-Sūtra 2.1 the position of Vedānta leaves no room for the composed texts (*smṛty-anavakāśa*). Śaṅkara explains that the *smṛti* ‘composed text’ for which no room is left (because it contradicts the *śruti* ‘revealed text’ as interpreted by Śaṅkara, and because it assumes principles which are not perceived either in the revealed texts or in daily life), is in the first place Kapila’s Sāṅkhya. Brahma-Sūtra 2.3 says further that “with this [also] Yoga is refuted” (*etena yogaḥ pratyuktaḥ*); according to Śaṅkara this means that the arguments by which the composed texts of Sāṅkhya are refuted apply also to the composed texts of Yoga (*yoga-smṛti*).<sup>83</sup>

4.4 In their direct and indirect criticism of the Sāṅkhya-position on the impurity of Vedic rituals, Kumārila and Śaṅkara seem to

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*anumātam, hiṁsāyāḥ śāstracoditavāt | ‘ahiṁsan sarvabhūtāny anyatra tīrthebhyah’ iti śruteḥ śāstracoditāyā hiṁsāyā na adharmaheturvam abhyupagamyate |* ChāndUpBh on 5.10.6.

<sup>82</sup> *abhyupagate ‘py adharmaheturve mantrair viśādivat tadapanayopapatteḥ na duḥkhakāryārambhaṇopapattiḥ vaidikānām karmaṇām -- mantreṇeva viśabhakṣaṇasyeti |* ChāndUpBh on 5.10.6.

<sup>83</sup> Although Śaṅkara admits that there are portions of Sāṅkhya and Yoga which do not contradict the *śruti* and are acceptable, the approach to other doctrines is here quite different from the “hierarchical form of treating other doctrines” (Halbfass 1988:355) which becomes typical for later Vedānta (Vijñānabhikṣu and later).

ignore or neglect one important Sāṃkhya-text, viz. the *Yukti-Dīpikā*. The YD on its part, takes into account several Mīmāṃsā-like arguments employed in a challenging objection (*pūrvapakṣa*). This objection is answered in a statement of the final position (*uttarapakṣa*) which seems to have been largely neglected not only by opponents of Sāṃkhya, but also by later thinkers of the same school. The middle of the sixth century has usually been accepted as the probable date of the YD (Frauwallner 1953:287; Solomon 1974:170, 179; cf. Halbfass 1991:118 note 29); it has been pointed out that the YD quotes authors like Śābara, Vasubandhu and Dīnāga, but not Kumārila (Solomon 1974:170)—nor is Dharmakīrti quoted where we would expect a reference to him (Pandeya 1967:xiii). Halbfass, however, felt that the *pūrvapakṣa* of the YD is very similar to Kumārila's argument on this topic, so much so that this passage in the YD might be a response to (and hence later than) Kumārila (Halbfass 1991:94). On a different basis (a quotation from the *Kāśikā*), Wezler and Motegi have now arrived at the conclusion that the YD was written between the end of the 7th and the beginning of the 8th century (Wezler & Motegi 1998:XXXVIIIf).<sup>84</sup>

Here we are confronted with a problem in the history of ideas in the narrower sense of this expression: is the YD earlier or later than Kumārila; did the author of the YD take Kumārila's work into account or not? If Wezler & Motegi's later date is accepted, the same problem is there with regard to the relation between the YD-author and Śāṃkara. Since the focus of this essay lies elsewhere, I will not address this important problem here in detail, but restrict myself to pointing out that (focusing on the relation with Kumārila) the treatment of the topic in the YD's *pūrvapakṣa* seems not really dependent on Kumārila's discussion. Thus, Kumārila illustrated his rejection of the view that giving pleasure to others is *dharma* and causing pain is *adharma* with the example of sexual intercourse with one's guru's wife (severely censured in Brahminical *dharma*-texts), but the YD has in addition to this 'negative' example also

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<sup>84</sup> On the earlier view that Vācaspati Miśra (who also wrote STK) was the author of the YD—thus, Dasgupta 1922, II:45 note 1 mentions the *Yukti-Dīpikā* among the works of Vācaspati Miśra—see Pandeya 1967:xiiiif and now also Wezler & Motegi 1998:XXVI note 67. Wezler & Motegi 1998:XXVI found evidence for "Gopālaka Rājāna" as name of the author.

the ‘positive’ example of a student who is made to suffer the hardships of celibacy, study, begging, etc.: this would be *adharmā* according to the rejected view (it causes suffering), though it is generally recognized as being very meritorious (YD 15.20f). Moreover, Kumārila is rather vague in his references to his opponents. One might see an implicit rejection of a view similar to the YD’s final view on this topic in Kumārila’s statement that doubt (*vicikitsā*) (i.e. doubt on good or wrong action) arises only from (conflicting statements in) the sacred texts (ŚIV 233-234 on MS 1.1.2). This would apparently imply that no validity is attributed to any independent human judgment or feeling of compassion. Whatever the mutual relation between these two important texts, the YD gives a *pūrvapakṣa* with sophisticated Mīmāṃsā-like arguments which presuppose, if not Kumārila’s ŚIV, in any case other Mīmāṃsā-texts apart from Jaimini’s Sūtra and Śabara’s Bhāṣya.<sup>85</sup> Perhaps the apparent mutual disregard of the two authors writing on similar problems has something to do with their geographic range: while Kumārila has strong connections with the South (the same applies to Śaṅkara), the YD seems to have been written in the North; in any case, “knowledge of the YD seems to have been confined to Kashmir and some parts of Northern India” (Wezler & Motegi 1998:XXXVI).

More interesting for us now is the *uttarapakṣa* given in the YD, in which the author goes a long way to meet the Mīmāṃsā objector. Unlike other Sāṃkhya-commentators, the YD-author does not regard the killing of an animal in a Vedic ritual as something bad. So why did the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā speak of an impurity of the Vedic sacrifice? Not because the enjoined infliction of injury would be an impurity in itself, but because this would lead to compassion and grief. The impurity mentioned in the kārikā would thus merely be this grief caused by the enjoined infliction of injury.

In the passage immediately preceding this statement of the final position, the YD-author says he does not think that someone

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<sup>85</sup> These arguments include a reference to the so-called *takra-kaunḍinya-nyāya* (already found in the MBh, but it is discussed in detail in Bhartṛhari’s Mahābhāṣya-Dīpikā; the YD cites elsewhere from Bhartṛhari’s Vākyapadīya) to illustrate the relation between general rule and specific exception. Also Bhartṛhari was familiar with pre-Kumārila and non-Śabara Mīmāṃsā-sources which are now lost (Bronkhorst 1989).

inflicting injury in accordance with sacred prescripts would get undesirable results (YD 16.1-2 / 34.11-12, quoted in 85); but even when heaven is reached through acts enjoined by the Veda, they cannot be performed without inflicting injury to other beings. Then he refers to a versified 'Golden Rule':

*na tat parasya saṁdadhyāt pratikūlaṁ yad ātmanah |  
eṣa saṁkṣepato dharmah kāmād anyah pravartate ||*

Let him not do unto another that which [would be] disagreeable to himself. This is, briefly [stated], the *dharma*. It proceeds as something different from desire.

(YD 16.5-6 / 34.16-17; = MBhār 13.114.8; pādas abd = MBhār 5.39.57abd; cf. other MBhār-quotations in section 3.1)

It is not entirely clear what the status of this formulation of the 'Golden rule' would be in the final view of the YD,<sup>86</sup> but it is in any case more the psychological effect of inflicting injury than the injury itself which is considered undesirable. The final solution arrived at here is clearly distinct from the one presented in other Sāṁkhya-commentaries such as Vācaspati Miśra's Sāṁkhya-Tattva-Kaumudī to which we referred earlier (section 3.2).

### *5. Post-Śaṅkara Vedānta and the eventual rehabilitation of Sāṁkhya and its objections*

5.0 In the centuries after Śaṅkara, South Asia witnessed great political, social and cultural transitions. Especially the northern part of the subcontinent was subjected to raids and conquests by Islamic rulers, culminating in the establishment of the Delhi sultanate in 1206. While Brahminical and Buddhist philosophers were refining their doctrines and polemical arguments, popular movements cultivating devotion to Śiva, Viṣṇu and various local gods became strong in South India towards the end of the first

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<sup>86</sup> *etan in yady etan nābhyupagamyate* (YD 16.7 / 34.20) probably does not refer back to this golden rule (which would imply its full rejection), but to the somewhat further removed statement *no khalv api brūmaḥ sāstracoditāyām hiṁsāyām pravartamānasyāniṣṭaphalasaṁbandho bhavati* (YD 16.1-2 / 34.11-12).



millennium, and strongly influenced the great transregional movements of the next millennium. Focusing on the internal philosophical developments, Frauwallner has emphasized the great contrast between the philosophical systems of the first millennium, which are mainly atheistic in character and generate philosophically significant thoughts, and the systems of the second millennium, which are primarily theistic and mainly borrow their supporting philosophical doctrines and techniques from their predecessors.

The increasing influence of popular religious forms is reflected in (non-philosophical) works in the field of ethics as well. In Dharmaśāstric and related texts from the 10th century onwards we find additions to the traditional prescripts and proscripts in the form of the so-called Kalivarjyas, lists of “things not to be done in the (present) Kali-age (even though they are prescribed in authoritative sources)” (Kane III:926-968). These lists are of great value as witnesses for the social and religious practices which had become or were becoming obsolete in the time they were composed, as well as for those which had become acceptable.<sup>87</sup>

Thus, the mention of the Puruṣamedha in these lists (Kane III:928f) in the first place shows that this sacrifice with a human being as victim had become obsolete. But it also shows that at the time when these lists were composed it was considered a real sacrifice which people of past ages had actually performed; and if we take into account the cited evidence for its acceptability in an earlier period (section 2.2), the past in which it was an acceptable ritualistic option was apparently just a few centuries earlier. If it was, as has been suggested, generally accepted as just a symbolical offering<sup>88</sup> from which the human victim is released unhurt, there would have been no good reason to adopt it in the list of Kalivarjyas. Also the offering of a cow and the animal sacrifice in

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<sup>87</sup> Cf. YājñSm 1.156cd *asvargyam lokavidviṣṭam dharmyam apy ācaren natu*: “That which does not lead to *svarga* and is detested by the people should not be done, even if it is in accordance with *dharma*,” which is often quoted in this context (e.g. by Vijñāneśvara in his commentary *Mitākṣarā* on YājñSm 1.109, cf. also Kane V:1270 note 2071 and Alsdorf 1962:45), and which I recently heard cited in India (Pune) in a discussion on killing or not killing a sacrificial victim.

<sup>88</sup> As is the view of Kane III:961f and others, cf. note 31.

general occur among the items in Kalivarjya-lists (Kane III:939, 964).

5.1 The intellectual and social environment of Rāmānuja, born in the first half of the 11th century in a Brahminical family not far from modern Madras, and the founder of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism and of the doctrine of Viśiṣṭa-Advaita, was thus entirely different from that of Śaṅkara, the great exponent of Advaita Vedānta. To demonstrate that his doctrine suits the ancient Vedānta-system even better than Śaṅkara's Advaita-doctrine, Rāmānuja wrote a commentary on the Brahma-Sūtra, the Śrī-Bhāṣya.<sup>89</sup>

As far as his ethical doctrine is concerned, he recommended adherence to the established Brahminical system of *varṇa* and *āśrama* and their respective duties.<sup>90</sup> But he was also able to set aside cast-boundaries in the name of devotion to Viṣṇu, if we go by some anecdotes about his life (cf. Esnoul 1964:65). In the light of modern Vaiṣṇava practice and in the light of adhortations to give up meat-eating and killing in important Vaiṣṇava texts such as the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa (11th cent?),<sup>91</sup> it may come as a surprise that Rāmānuja, like Śaṅkara, defends the animal sacrifice under Brahma-Sūtra 3.1.25. It no doubt spared him fierce protests from the Brahminical orthodoxy. While Śaṅkara mentions the authority of the sacred texts as the only justification for the killing of the sacrificial victim, Rāmānuja gave a slightly different justification: Making the sacrificial animal assent in its death (*saṁjñāpana*) is not a matter of inflicting injury at all: the animal will go to heaven.

<sup>89</sup> Rāmānuja became famous for his commentaries on the Brahma-Sūtra and on the Bhagavad-Gītā. On the third item of the 'three-fold basis' (*prasthānatrayī*) of Vedānta, the Upaniṣads, no commentaries of his hand are known. Cf. Carman 1974:49ff on the Sanskrit writings (nine in number) attributed to Rāmānuja.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Kumarappa 1934:287 who refers to Rāmānuja's Śrī-Bhāṣya on BS 3.4.32 and his Gītā-Bhāṣya on 18.41.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Kane 1946: "The spread of Vaiṣṇavism tended to wean people from flesh as required by the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa 7.15.7-8." The text cited is: *na dadyād āmiṣaṁ śrāddhe na cādyād dharmatattvavit | munyannaiḥ syāt parā prītis tathā na paśuḥimsayā*. But cf. Schmidt's observations (1997:228): "in the BhP 4.2.6 the killing of game for the ancestor worship is still mentioned as permitted or required" though "The guilty King Purañjara is chopped up in yonder world by the murdered animals (4.28.26)."

For this, Rāmānuja can cite supporting statements, even from the mantra-portion of the Veda: “You do not really die here, not are you hurt . . . ” (TB 3.7.7.14, see above, section 2.2 and notes 23-25). This way, Rāmānuja remains entirely faithful to the sacred Vedic texts and rituals, but at the same time he implicitly meets the general, non-ritualistic requirement that one should not cause suffering to others.<sup>92</sup>

Rāmānuja’s argument is based on the ancient view that the sacrificial victim goes to heaven. In the past it seems to have given rise to sarcastic answers of anti-Brahminical and anti-ritualistic groups. Halbfass (1991:94) mentions “an old argument attributed to the Cārvāka materialists and rationalists: A person who believes that ritual killing is not only meritorious for the sacrificer, but also beneficial for the sacrificial victim, should not hesitate to slaughter his own father.” Further, according to Halbfass, Kumārila

does not try to explain away the ritual slaughter of animals (*paśuhimsā*), or to justify it by reconciling it with the ideal of *ahiṃsā*. He does not rely on the old argument that the sacrificial animal itself benefits from its role, and that its ritual death secures its residence in heaven. By the time of Kumārila, this argument was widely discredited; it had been ridiculed by the Cārvāka materialists and other opponents of the Vedic tradition. (Halbfass 1991:113)<sup>93</sup>

If we assume that Halbfass’s judgment is indeed applicable to Kumārila’s situation, how should we understand the fact that Rāmānuja takes the same old argument of beneficial slaughtering again out of the mothballs? Has Rāmānuja overseen the drawbacks of this argument? Is it a lack of theoretical acumen on the part of Rāmānuja? Or is it a sign of a reactionary tendency?

Here we should be aware of the quite different perspectives of those employing or neglecting the argument. In the first place, the argument was still there in seed-form in the transmitted Vedic texts which contain the mantras denying actual killing of the victim, and

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<sup>92</sup> “Not causing the suffering of others” (*paraduḥkhāhetutvam*) is the definition of *ahiṃsā* given by Rāmānuja in the *Gītā-Bhāṣya* on BhG 10.5 (cf. van Buitenen 1956:248 with note 425).

<sup>93</sup> Halbfass (1991:128 note 117) refers to the Cārvāka-chapter of Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya’s *Sarvadarśana-Saṃgraha*, and to Alsdorf 1962:35f.

in that sense the argument of beneficial slaughtering was not yet 'dead'. In the second place, Rāmānuja's public (first of all his readers: followers and opponents; or, if we want to use these terms, his intellectual environment and 'literary field') was quite different from that of Kumārila. Kumārila was opposing fierce anti-Brahminical criticism of Buddhists and others. Although Buddhists were still present in South Asia in Rāmānuja's time, they did not form his first target of criticism. He rather directed his arguments to previous Vedānta teachers, especially Śaṅkara. With his Sanskrit writings he sought acceptance not only in Vedāntic circles, but also in circles of Brahminical Vaiṣṇavas. To both groups, the argument that the victim goes to heaven must have been quite acceptable. On the other hand, while there was for Rāmānuja no reason to refer to the scriptural support for a human sacrifice, he also needed not fear, from the side of the Śaṅkara Advaitins and the Brahminical Vaiṣṇavas, a 'reductio ad absurdum' argument against the entire Veda based on the Vedic prescripts for human sacrifice and a rational or at least anti-traditionalistic rejection of this.

5.2 To another Vedānta philosopher and Vaiṣṇava theologian, namely Madhva (13th century), one ascribes the introduction of the *piṣṭa-paśu*, an animal made of dough, as a general substitute for the real sacrificial animal. A 'dough-animal' is already mentioned in the Manu-Smṛti (5.37), but there it does not seem to be intended as a general substitute for the sacrificial victim.<sup>94</sup> Madhva's

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<sup>94</sup> Nor is it so intended in other early occurrences: the effigies of a ram and an ewe in the Varuṇapraghāsa (cf. Hillebrandt 1897:116, and ĀpŚS 8.5.42f, MaiS 1.10.12 and KāthS 36.6); the dough-animals mentioned in ŚānGS 4.19, cf. also Mānava-GS 2.10.1ff (at the end of a series of house-rituals to be performed when one redescends from sleeping in high bedsteads). In general I would agree here with Schmidt's judgement regarding these animal-images (1997:214): "Figures made of flour (*piṣṭa*) and other material as substitutes for animal victims occur in the Veda only in very specific cases which can hardly be considered to be at the root of an incipient vegetarian movement. To judge from the known evidence, vegetal substitutes for animals became current only rather late when a vegetarian movement unrelated to the old ritual had emerged." As far as I can see, however, this judgement does not lend support to Schmidt's "main argument" that "the Vedic sources do allow us to reconstruct a development [of *ahimsā* and vegetarianism] within

biographer Nārāyaṇa records that Madhva, together with his younger brother as Hotṛ-priest, performed a *piṣṭa-paśu*-sacrifice, which led to very sharp criticism by other Brahmins.<sup>95</sup> Madhva's followers offer even today only with these dough substitutes for the animals:

The Mādhvas of Karnataka and southern Maharashtra have, for the last 600 years, substituted a *piṣṭapaśu* or animal made of dough. They have gone to the [extreme] of placing a special thin flour omentum (*vapā*) over dough organs (*aṅgas*), [pasting] them onto a specially prepared wooden or papier mache frame (i.e. the skeleton), and [binding] it to the sacrificial post. It is then suffocated in a mock manner. Thus, the sacrificial structure is retained uninjured. (Smith 1987:74.)

In the light of the preceding it will again come as a surprise that even Madhva (13th century) still defends the animal sacrifice under the same sūtra *aśuddham iti cen na, śabdāt* (in his text BS no. 3.1.27):

*hiṁsārūpatvāt pāpasyāpi sambhavād duḥkhaṁ ca bhavaty iti cen: na, śabdavihitatvāt.* (BSBhM)

Since [the sacrifice] is violent, there is a possibility that there is badness (demerit) as well, and there must be suffering [for the sacrificer]. If [someone says this, the answer is:] No [it is not like that], since [the violence] is prescribed by the sacred texts.<sup>96</sup>

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the Vedic culture" (1997:228).

<sup>95</sup> See Nārāyaṇa's Madhva-vijaya 9.44-50, to which Glasenapp 1923:82, note 1, and Sharma 1960:106-107 make reference. The work was not accessible to me in a proper edition (e.g. Bombay 1883; I could only make use of a popular edition in Kannada-script). Cf. also Kashikar & Parpola 1983:247f. Schmidt 1997:228, apparently not aware of Nārāyaṇa's biography, writes: "Substitute animals were only introduced by his [Madhva's] followers as is apparent from an interpolation in the Kumbhakona edition of the Mahābhārata (in the crit. ed. 806\* after 12.123.15)." Since there is no 806\*-passage after 12.123.15 or anywhere near this verse, the latter reference must be a mistake for 12.323.16 after which the critical edition (part III, Mokṣadharmā, B, p. 1828f) mentions a 806\*-passage from the Kumbhakona edition. According to this passage, Brhaspati is angry with king Vasu who offers a *piṣṭapaśu* instead of a real animal.

<sup>96</sup> Kashikar's statement (1964:85) that Madhva "maintained that the animal

Madhva further supports his statement, as usual, with some quotation, in this case from the *Vārāha-Purāṇa*.

It is worthwhile noting in this context that Madhva often gives quotations from sources which are not only unknown to us, but which were already unknown (or allegedly 'lost') in his own time. Recently, R. Mesquita (1997) has re-studied the relevant material and arrived at the conclusion that the 'lost' works mentioned by Madhva are fictitious, and that the quotations from these works have only Madhva as author. It is clear that this way of acting, already severely attacked by early critics such as Veṅkaṭanātha (13th century) and Appayya-Dīkṣita (16th-17th century) (Mesquita 1997:23-27), was for Madhva a badly needed device to bridge the gap between his convictions (regarding the nature of God, God's relation to people's souls, etc.) as they suited his religious (sectarian) preferences, and the traditional Brahminical authoritative sources (especially the *Brahma-Sūtras* and *Upaniṣads*). It is all the more remarkable that even with this flexible attitude towards the tradition, Madhva still defended the animal sacrifice. Again, by way of partial explanation, it can be said that this spared him fierce protests from the Brahminical orthodoxy at least on this point.

5.3 Several commentaries and subcommentaries on the *Brahma-Sūtra* have been written in the first few centuries of the second millennium, and it is not possible to review all of them in the present essay. It may suffice to point out that in their comments on BS 3.1.25 they mostly follow in the footsteps of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva,<sup>97</sup> and speak of a general injunction

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prescribed in the Veda as an offering is not the living animal, but one made out of flour (*piṣṭapaśu*)" must be based on some confusion, as the place to which he refers in support of it, "Madhvāchārya's bhāṣya on Bādarāyaṇa's *Sūtra* III.2.4" (Kashikar 1964:85 note 14) does not say anything about the animal sacrifice and the *piṣṭapaśu* (it deals with the reality of dreams). He probably meant to refer to *Brahma-Sūtra* 3.1.27, or to the passage 3.1.24-27, where, however, the animal sacrifice is defended (as we see from the quotation).

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Nimbārka (13th cent.) in his *Vedānta-Pārijāta-Saurabha* and Śrīnivāsa (14th cent.) in his *Vedānta-Kaustubha* (Abb. under VPS); Sudarśana (14th cent.) in *Śrutaprakāśikā* on Rāmānuja's *Śrībhāṣya*. The Śrīkara-Bhāṣya (c. 1400?) under BS 3.1.25 first permits the offering of a real *paśu*, and defends it very much like Rāmānuja. The author concludes his comments on

against killing, and the acceptability of sacrificial killing in spite of this.<sup>98</sup>

One author, however, comes with a remarkable explanation of this sūtra: the Vaiṣṇava theologian and devotee of Kṛṣṇa, Vallabhācārya (15th/16th century), who wrote not only a commentary on the BS, but also one on another work esteemed very highly by him, the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa. According to him, BS 3.1.25 rejects quite a different objection than assumed by Śaṅkara and others. The objection would be that food (rice, etc.) would be impure if souls of the deceased were to be associated with it; the answer would be that the sacred texts speak of an offering of food in the fire (cf. ChāndUp 5.7), and on account of this food becomes pure.

Although Vallabha's way of meeting the objection may not seem very convincing, it is to be admitted that his objection is closer to the passage which the whole pāda BS 3.1 discusses here as problematic,<sup>99</sup> namely the ChāndUp description of the descent of the souls of ritualists from the moon to the earth. Śaṅkara's bringing in of the topic of the sacrificial killing under BS 3.1.25 is in fact somewhat far-fetched, as it is only justified with respect to an element in Śaṅkara's *pūrvapakṣa* not hinted at in the previous sūtras. In any case, for Vallabha the great advantage of his explanation must have been that it led him beyond the difficult topic of the sacrificial killing, accepted by orthodox Brahmins and by most previous Brahma-Sūtra commentators, but rejected by the

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this sūtra with the intriguing statement that the offering of a real *paśu* as in solemn rituals (*śrautakarma*), such as the human (!) and the horse sacrifice, or (*vā*) the offering of a dough animal as in funeral ceremonies (*pitṛmedha*) is right (*yuktam*). Under the next sūtra 3.1.26 the picture changes completely, as he argues that only a dough animal (*piṣṭapaśu*) is to be taken because both a prohibition and a non-prohibition for *hiṁsā* is found in the authoritative texts (*śrutiṣu hiṁsāniṣedhāniṣedhavyapadeśāt, piṣṭapaśuparigrahatvam arthād upadiṣyate*).

<sup>98</sup> This even applies to the 20th-century Vedānta philosopher Radhakrishnan, who briefly comments on 3.1.25 as follows: "If it be said that the Scripture also states that we should not hurt any creature, it is said in answer that it is a general rule and other scriptural injunctions give the exceptions" (Radhakrishnan 1960:441).

<sup>99</sup> After all, the BS is in the first place a *mīmāṃsā*, an investigation of difficult passages in the sacred texts (cf. Thibaut 1904:xliv).

for him so important Bhāgavata-Purāṇa (cf. above, note 91 for the tendency to reject meat as sacrificial substance in the BhP).

5.4 In the meantime, Sāṃkhya, which was only very poorly represented in the centuries after Śaṃkara, experienced a ‘come back’ in the 15th/16th century, when a Sāṃkhya-Sūtra appeared on the scene rather suddenly.<sup>100</sup> Our earliest source of the Sāṃkhya-Sūtra, Aniruddha’s commentary (Vṛtti) on it (ca. 1500), remains silent on the problem of sacrificial killing at the place where we would expect him to mention it: immediately after the rejection of the adequacy of ‘visible’ means (medicines, gems, etc.) to overcome suffering (SS 1.2-5).

The next important commentary on the SS is the Sāṃkhya-Pravacana-Bhāṣya by Vijñānabhikṣu (16th century). Sūtra 1.6 “non-distinction for both” (*aviśeṣaś cobhayoh*) which Aniruddha interpreted as a reference to a rule of disputation (“an opponent can point out a defect in another’s view only if his own view is established”), is interpreted by Vijñānabhikṣu as an assertion according to which there is no difference between ‘visible’ means (medicines etc.) and ‘invisible’ means (Vedic sacrifices).<sup>101</sup> Vijñānabhikṣu cites Sāṃkhya-Kārikā 1.2 in support of his interpretation, and says that Vedic sacrifices have an admixture of impurity on account of the infliction of injury. He also mentions the objection that the Vedic injunction to kill at a sacrifice cannot have any bad effect.

<sup>100</sup> The earlier commentary Yukti-Dīpikā explicitly presents the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā on which it comments as Sūtra-text. For some observations on the place which the comparatively late appearance of the Sāṃkhya-Sūtra occupies in a larger context of literary production in South Asian philosophy, see Houben 1997b:289, 291 and 304f notes 60f.

<sup>101</sup> This distinction between Vijñānabhikṣu and Aniruddha, though not very big, is sufficient to disprove that “Vijñānabhikṣu is dependent throughout on both Aniruddha’s reading and his interpretation of the sūtra collection” (Larson & Bhattacharya 1987:327, referring to Garbe). But if it is accepted that Vijñānabhikṣu’s comments suit sūtra 1.6 better than Aniruddha’s comments, this would imply that there is indeed some scope for improvement on Aniruddha’s comments, and hence that the Sāṃkhya-Sūtra is a text not written by Aniruddha himself. In any case, Vijñānabhikṣu’s comments are on this point closer to the exposition in the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā.



To support his rejection of the view that only killing which is not prescribed leads to demerit, Vijñānabhikṣu refers to the Mahābhārata according to which Yudhiṣṭhira and the others have to carry out expiations to remove the demerit resulting from the killings at the battlefield, even when the killing was in accordance with the warrior's 'own *dharma*'. He further cites a 'statement of Mārkaṇḍeya(-Purāṇa)' according to which the *dharma* of the three [Vedas?] is rich in *adharma*. The much-discussed sentence of ChāndUp 8.15 according to which one should be someone who "does not harm any living being, except at sacred (sacrificial) places" (section 2.1 above) is interpreted by Vijñānabhikṣu as implying merely that good results follow if inflicting injury is given up outside the sacrifice. It does not imply in addition that bad results are absent if injury is inflicted within a sacrifice.<sup>102</sup> Finally he refers to his own commentary on the Yoga-Sūtra, where he discussed the same problem more extensively.<sup>103</sup>

5.5 While Śaṅkara knocked down the Sāṃkhya-system on the basis of a Vedānta position, Vijñānabhikṣu gave the system again a respectable place on the basis of a Vedānta position. For Vijñānabhikṣu, Sāṃkhya occupied a definite place in a whole system of philosophical systems, the top of which was formed by Vijñānabhikṣu's own theistic Vedānta, which was opposed to the views of Śaṅkara. Vijñānabhikṣu also wrote his own commentary on the Brahma-Sūtra, the Vijñānāmṛta. Commenting on 3.1.25 he differs considerably from Śaṅkara and other predecessors:

But [it may be objected:] the group of bad living beings that have descended to hell etc., is impure: it is not appropriate that the supreme Lord should supervise these. If [someone says this, the answer is:] No [it is not like that], on account of the [authority of] sacred texts; for to something which has been established by the sacred texts there can be no opposition—which would be a defilement (of these sacred texts)—by reasoning. This is the meaning.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>102</sup> SPBh 9:21-23 (on SS 1.6): *ahiṃsan sarvabhūtāny anyatra tīrthebhya iti śrutis tu vaidhātīriktahiṃsānivr̥tter iṣṭasāadhanatvam eva vakti, na tu vaidhahiṃsāyā aniṣṭasāadhanatvābhāvam api.*

<sup>103</sup> See Yoga-Vārttika on 2.34.

<sup>104</sup> *nanu, aśuddhaṃ narakādyavarohipāpījīvajātaṃ tatra parameśvarādhi-*

Under the previous sūtra he explains that the descent to the earth is supervised (*adhiṣṭhita*) by the Lord. He also refers to an interpretation by 'modern' commentators which is very similar to the one provided by Śaṅkara: rice etc. would have been inhabited (*adhiṣṭhita*) by other souls (different from the descending ones, which are only in conjunction with rice etc.). Vijñānabhikṣu's bringing in of a reference to God at this place is hardly acceptable in the light of the ChāndUp-passage ultimately discussed; his theism as such, however, is in the light of the Brahma-Sūtra as a whole not entirely indefensible.<sup>105</sup> More important is that, as in the case of Vallabhācārya, his deviation from the earlier major commentators allows him to avoid an interpretation according to which the BS would defend that sacrificial killing does not lead to bad results.

From the 16th century onward, it seems that Vedāntic authors (subcommentators on the Brahma-Sūtra, in whichever way they interpret BS 3.1.25) such as Appayya-Dīkṣita generally left out sacrificial killing from the general prohibition to kill, while especially (Vedāntic) Vaiṣṇavas but also grammarians like Kaunḍa-Bhaṭṭa and Nāgeśa (17th and 17th-18th century), both with Vedāntic and Sāṃkhya-sympathies, would reject a real animal sacrifice altogether.<sup>106</sup>

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*ṣṭhānaṃ nocitam iti cen: na, śabdāt; na hi śabdasiddhe 'rthe tarkavirodho dūṣaṇam ity arthaḥ.* (BSBhV p. 429)

<sup>105</sup> A extensive consideration of the parallels and differences of Śaṅkara's and Rāmānuja's BS-commentaries, the BS and the Upaniṣads led Thibaut to the conclusion that Rāmānuja and his emphasis on the personal character of God would be more in harmony with the BS, whereas Śaṅkara's view in which the role of a personal God is played down would be more in harmony with the older Upaniṣads (Thibaut 1904:lxv-cxxviii).

<sup>106</sup> Cf. passages cited by Gune 1994:156-162.

## PART C. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6. *Periods in the acceptability of violence in the sacrifice*

6.0 Although the controversies on the problem of sacrificial killing continue after Vijñānabhikṣu, we have come at the end of the period to be reviewed in the present essay. We may conclude with a brief discussion of the results obtained (sections 6-8).

6.1 Above we gave a diagram of the different periods to be distinguished with regard to the acceptability of sacrificial violence and the human sacrifice, in order to provide a background for the philosophical discussions. We are now in a position to extend and refine this diagram.

Diagram II: Acceptability of sacrificial violence (SV), human sacrifice (HS) in Brahminical circles (main tendencies), expanded:

period | SV, accept.? | HS, accept.? | texts, e.g. | datable event (centuries CE)

A	yes	yes	RV, some ŚS	
B	partly avoided	no	ŚB, most ŚS, ChāndUp	ending some time after Aśokan edicts -3 CE
C	defended and criticized	yes	major red. MBhr, emerging Syst. Bhartṛhari Sāṃkhya-c. Kumārila	from ca -2 CE Bhart. +5 CE Kumārila +7 CE
D	increasingly rejected	no	Kalivarjyas Madhvavij. Vij.bhikṣu on BrahmSū	Madhva's 'dough animal sacr.', +13 CE century. Vijñānabhikṣu +16 CE

### *7. Diverging perspectives within and accross the periods*

7.1 While this diagram brings out most clearly the diachronic variations in general tendencies from one period to another, it should be noted that there are also strong variations synchronically, i.e. within one period. On the basis of the textual evidence reviewed, it has become clear that Brahmins defending sacrificial violence in period C were cautiously but unmistakably criticized by Sāṃkhya and Yoga-authors. We have here, within the circles of Brahmins (including Brahminical ascetics), two clearly opposed perspectives on the problem of sacrificial violence, sacrificial violence was “defended and criticized.” Similarly, the expression “increasingly rejected” in column 2 row D, implies a dynamic relationship between opposed perspectives, the one accepting and defending sacrificial violence, the other rejecting it. For periods A and B, I am not aware of evidence for a strong opposition of perspectives on sacrificial violence in general within Brahminical circles (there were of course strong contrasts of Brahmins vs. Jainas and Buddhists).<sup>107</sup> As for period B, both ascetics and householders seem to have generally accepted that the former should avoid violence more strictly than the latter. A closer study of material pertaining to the periods C and D may enable us to

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<sup>107</sup> Whether in period A there were any fluctuations in the acceptability of sacrificial violence and especially of human sacrifice, it is difficult to say. Wilson (1852) and Colebrooke (as referred to by Wilson) conclude on the basis of far too little evidence that the human sacrifice was not accepted in the Veda, but was introduced by later authors of Brāhmaṇas (Wilson) or Purāṇas like the Kālikā (Colebrooke). This conclusion is echoed by Westermarck 1912:437. Already Weber 1864 had collected more Vedic textplaces pointing to human sacrifice. With regard to the sacred text of the people which are linguistically and culturally most akin to the Vedic South Asians, viz. the ancient Iranians’ Avesta, it has been observed that it “contains no suggestion of that custom [viz. the human sacrifice] as having been practiced at any time” (Edwards 1913:854). Hence, the ancient Iranians have been mentioned as the only Indo-European people not following the custom of human sacrifice (Edwards 1913:853). However, no certain statement can be made about the more remote past, as the available texts, even admitting that they are “but windows onto a much larger tradition that had already been developing for centuries” (Skjaervo 1997:108), have to a large extent originated in reformatory circles (esp. ‘Zarathustra and his followers’), and have been filtered by generations of Zarathustrian transmitters.

make a further distinction between sub-periods within these major ones, perhaps also between synchronic (e.g. social or geographic) variations. The precise historical situation of the *Yukti-Dīpikā* deserves further investigation. The same applies to the relation between *Vijñānabhikṣu's* and *Vallabhācārya's* deviation from centuries of established exegesis of BS 3.1.25, and especially to the context of their innovative interpretations (claimed to be more original). There is still much material (*Vedānta*, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Sāṃkhya* and grammarians' texts) to be studied for the period from the 16th century onwards. For periods A and B, on the other hand, there is probably insufficient even just roughly datable material for further distinctions.

7.2 The "yes's" and "no's" regarding the acceptability of the human sacrifice (column 3) refer to major tendencies. In all periods except A there is evidence for a simultaneous opposite perspective as well. Even though the *Śrauta-Sūtras* were not written simultaneously and at the same place, they may be taken as testifying to the existence of two perspectives on human sacrifice in period B. The limited number of *Śrauta-Sūtras* indicating a pre-*Śrauta-Sūtra* acceptance of the human sacrifice (mentioned in column 4 row A) are taken to continue older attitudes, but as texts they are of course not older than the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* and other sources (*Śrauta-Sūtras*) bearing witness to its rejection or to an embarrassment with it. For now, the indirect evidence regarding the acceptability of human sacrifice in the pre-*Śrauta-Sūtra* or *Ṛg-Vedic* (and pre-*Ṛg-Vedic*) period (A) does not allow a sharp distinction between opposed perspectives.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> It may be doubted whether a closer study of the *Ṛgvedic* material will enable us to distinguish with sufficient clarity distinct perspectives on human sacrifice or even on sacrificial violence in general. Thus, a *Ṛgvedic* verse, cited in *ĀśvGS* 1.1.3-4, speaks of words of praise which are equivalent to a sacrifice of oxen, bulls and cows: *ā te agna ṛcā havír hṛdā taṣṭam bharāmasi | té te bhavantūksāṇa ṛṣabhāso vaśā utā* (*RV* 6.16.47). This could indeed be used to justify the substitution of an animal sacrifice by mere praise; nevertheless, a rejection of these sacrifices as such is not expressed. Rather, the importance and value of sincere poetical praise (with an *ṛc*) is here emphasized.

## 8. *Arguments and perspectives regarding the problem of killing*

8.0 With the observations and diagram under 6 and 7 we have summarized the historical-perspectivistic background. We may now take a closer look at the arguments and the perspectives in the narrower sense: the presuppositions and perceptions of the different authors. We start with:

### 8.1 *Observations on the arguments used in the discussions*

(a) A tension between traditionality and rationality is reflected in the arguments from the time of the emergence of philosophical systems (as reflected in the Mahābhārata and pre-classical systems) onwards. From then on, rationality is manifestly present in each period and subperiod. But it does not gain momentum. On the other hand, traditionality, in the form of references to authoritative texts and defences of the validity of tradition, is strengthened and reinforced, and it pushes subsequent forms of rational criticism to a non-challenging, secondary (*pūrvapakṣa*) role in support of the traditionally (and irrationally) given.

It is tempting to see the method of transmission of knowledge as an important correlative, if not causal factor in this situation. This method, as is well known, is itself fully dependent on traditionality, in the sense that it requires considerable effort (learning by heart, teaching, copying of generally rapidly deteriorating manuscripts) of persons devoted to the tradition. Hence, in the course of time, traditionality is unavoidably strengthened and reinforced by some sort of natural selection: those ideas which have the strongest bond with traditionalism have the best chances for survival. By the same process, rationality is marginalized, and can survive only in submission to traditionality (on a small scale: as *pūrvapakṣas* introducing the *siddhānta*; on a larger scale, as a neo-Sāṃkhya subordinated to Vedāntic systems).<sup>109</sup>

But we also see that, in the process, the tradition gains in breadth and 'wisdom'. Points of criticism are absorbed and become

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<sup>109</sup> Cf. Houben forthc. b and Houben in prep. for further reflections and considerations regarding this point.

new traditionalized (often hierarchically ordered) options. Devices like references to lost parts of the Veda or other 'lost' authoritative texts,<sup>110</sup> the presentation of a new interpretation as a more original one, etc., bring in some flexibility with regard to the guidelines offered by tradition, and at the same time a greater necessity of using rationality on a secondary plane.

(b) In South Asia, as in Europe, centuries of discussions on ethical problems allowed for the development of most sophisticated argumentations. In Europe, some of the more remarkable and consequential sophistications took place along the lines of a very successful and paradigmatic branch of learning, viz. mathematics. Two cases which may be considered symptomatic are Spinoza's *Ethica more geometrico demonstrata*, and Th. Hobbes' explicit pronouncements that ethics should base itself on the method of geometry and physics in order to be able to make a solid contribution to truth (Ritter 1972:770).

In South Asia, sophistications are made mainly along the lines of the paradigm of the successful linguistic sciences, grammar and technical Mīmāṃsā, and make use of established principles of "general rule and exception," "contradiction and its conditions and countermeasures," etc. There seems to have been very little incentive to search for generally valid ethical principles or axioms. Formulations of the 'Golden Rule' did exist (as attested by the Mahābhārata), but it did not have a generally accepted high authority as it was not found in the ancient traditional texts.

Two Brahminical philosophical systems in particular accorded a relatively high status to rationality (*anumāna*, inference) and would probably have offered the best opportunities for a development favouring a rational ethical system: Sāṅkhya and Vaiśeṣika. But they seem to have stagnated as rational systems and survived only as sets of dogmas (partly on account of the system of knowledge-transmission?).

(c) One of the oldest passages generally acknowledged as authoritative *śruti* and interpretable as a mild repudiation of sacrificial vi-

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<sup>110</sup> Cf. with this the concept of the oral Torah in the Hebrew exegetical tradition, van Bakkum et. al. 1997:298f.

olence is Chāndogya-Upaniṣad 8.15, *ahiṃsan sarvabhūtāni* (this part often echoed or reformulated in philosophical and ethical literature as *na hiṃsyāt sarvā bhūtāni*), *anyatra tīrthebhyaḥ*. From this Upaniṣadic statement, one has derived, by systematic interpretive reasoning<sup>111</sup>—i.e. the kind of reasoning which accepts its subordinate position vis-à-vis the tradition—both the admissability of sacrificial violence (e.g. Kumārila, Śaṅkara) and its reprehensibility (e.g. Vijñānabhikṣu).

### 8.2 Undiscussed presuppositions

It can be said that the Sāṅkhya system, at least in its classical formulation, emphasizes the relative importance of rationality (in its own categories: *tarka* or *anumāna*) vis-à-vis tradition (*āgama*) right from the outset.

The Vedānta system, however, originating as a hermeneutical discipline of the Vedas, especially its Upaniṣadic sections, naturally accords priority to the authority of the texts. Since Vedānta leaves the door open, if not for rational criticism straightaway, at least for later, post-Vedic and less strictly Brahminical influences by accepting for instance the Bhagavad-Gītā as part of its threefold basis (*prasthānatrayī*), there is some moderation of the staunch Brahminical traditionalism with regard to ritual matters, and this is increasingly felt in the later forms of theistic (Vaiṣṇava) Vedānta.

No scope for such a moderating influence is there in the case of Mīmāṃsā, since this system is entirely focused on the interpretation of the Brahminical ritualistic parts of the Vedas. Also some other divergent fundamental choices of the different systems underly the discussion on “to kill or not to kill the sacrificial animal”: whereas Mīmāṃsā is devoted to the lifestyle of the sacrificing householder (often seen as incompatible with universal non-violence), both early Sāṅkhya and early Vedānta are closely related to the renunciatory style of life (just as, incidentally, the Jains and Buddhists).

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<sup>111</sup> The textplaces themselves and the meaning they express effortlessly would come under direct perception in Mīmāṃsā (as science of interpretive reasoning), the reasoning proper (*anumāna*, inference) starts from this directly perceived meaning.



### 8.3 *Varying perceptions of reality*

The perception of reality differs considerably for the different participants in the discussions. The adherent of Sāṃkhya perceives a suffering animal, which he sees as a living being like himself. Among those who defend the animal sacrifice there are some (Kumārila, Śaṅkara) who are entirely unwilling to give any rational argument whatsoever: they only say that the sacrificial killing must be good because it is prescribed by the sacred texts. On this point, therefore, they display something which approaches a 'blind faith' in the texts, in as much as the perception of the victim's suffering and the non-perception of the victim's going to heaven are entirely neglected. Others, e.g. Rāmānuja, do try to come with additional arguments apart from the sacred texts, but these are based on an entirely different perception of the act of killing: it is seen, not as real killing but as a transferral of the animal to heaven. Rhetorical and ritual means to promote precisely this perception of the act of killing were employed, as we have seen, in the Vedic ritual system, and it was further confirmed in Manu's statement that "in sacrifice killing is no killing" (Manu 5.39). Among the two mentioned perceptions, it is the Sāṃkhya perception which accords more with normal sensory perception aided by common sense. In the case of the alternative perception, one can speak of a believer's perception based on an adherence to the sacred texts, and to a late-Vedic 'magico-ritualistic' world view.

### 9. *Conclusion*

With some generalization—hence unavoidably with some distortion—it can be said that in the text material reviewed sacrificial violence is initially criticized by appeals to reason and references to extra-Vedic principles (e.g. the 'Golden Rule'), and defended by traditionalism, i.e., by references to authoritative texts and 'rational' defences of the irrational validity of tradition.

In the course of time, even the Brahminical-Hindu criticism is absorbed within the fold of traditionalism, and supported with the help of authoritative references and interpretive reasoning. The

denial or non-perception of violence is justified more by traditionalization (the 'rational' defence of the irrational authority and validity of the tradition) than by rationalization. Put differently: the rationalization of sacrificial violence is on closer study a traditionalization which tries to keep this violence outside the jurisdiction of rationality. However, the tradition is able to absorb contrasting and diverging options, and this makes rationality on a secondary level quite necessary to make a choice between the traditional options. In a traditionalistic society or environment an alternative option can start to compete more seriously with other, for the one or the other reason less desirable ones, if some traditional support is found (or, if need be, created) for it. This was already well understood by Madhva.

Although the scope of this essay was limited by its focus on just a part of all possibly relevant sources (viz. Brahminical philosophers, especially Sāṃkhya and Vedānta), the material reviewed was sufficient to show that neither a one-dimensional historical approach, nor an ahistorical perspectivist approach can do justice to it. An argument is neither to be understood only in an 'orthogenetic' relation with previous and later arguments, nor only in the context of an ahistorical system of philosophical perspectives. The value of the classical (and pre-classical, as far as it is reflected in e.g. the Mahābhārata) Sāṃkhya argument against sacrificial violence is quite different from the, in outer appearance similar, argument of the 'subjugated' Sāṃkhya of Vijñānabhikṣu. Moreover, the classical Sāṃkhya position appears different depending on how one evaluates the ancient view that the sacrificed animal goes to heaven: Sāṃkhya is either rational and progressive vis-à-vis the irrationality and conservatism of the tradition, or it fosters an emotionalism vis-à-vis the knowledge of reality imbued in the traditional rituals. Again, the contrast between the grammarian Bhartrhari's acceptance of sacrificial violence and the grammarian Nāgeśa's rejection of it, is to be seen against the background of their quite different philosophical and cultural surroundings.

Whatever one's own position in these matters may be—the urgency of modern ecological and social problems will prevent

anyone from advocating the thoughtless continuation of behavioral patterns stemming from the Stone Age<sup>112</sup>—if one wants to understand the position of others, including former authors on the subject, the framework of a perspectivistic-historical approach recommends itself for dealing in a balanced way with the complexities involved.

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<sup>112</sup> This is implicitly accepted in modern debates, where not only those opposing the Vedic sacrificial system use arguments referring to the modern ecological and social situation in India (waste of scarce resources, confirmation of low position of women and outcasts, etc.), also the defenders try to find modern 'scientific' arguments by claiming, for instance, positive effects from sacrifices on the ecology and on social life—as in *Agnihotra - process of purification of the atmosphere - scientific perspective* (Shivpuri: Institute for Studies in Vedic sciences, 1990) by Madan Deshpande and Manohar M. Potdar, to mention a single example.

## Abbreviated Titles

Note: Generally used editions and translations (for the Vedic texts cf. Gonda 1975 and 1977) are here not mentioned, except for some oft-quoted ones or if confusions are likely to arise.

AiB	Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa. Ed. Th. Aufrecht, Bonn 1879; tr. A.B. Keith in <i>Rigveda Brāhmaṇas</i> , 1920.
ĀpDhS	Āpastamba-Dharma-Sūtra.
ĀpŚS	Āpastamba-Śrauta-Sūtra.
ĀśvGS	Āśvalāyana-Grhya-Sūtra.
BauDhS	Baudhāyana-Dharma-Sūtra.
BauŚS	Baudhāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra.
BrĀrUp	Brhad-Āraṇyaka-Upaniṣad.
BS	Brahma-Sūtra. Cf. BSBh, ŚrīBh.
BSBh	Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Śaṅkarācārya. Ed. Madras: Samata Books 1983 (Complete works of Sri Sankaracharya, vol. 7). Tr. Thibaut 1904.
BSBhM	Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Madhvācārya, with comm. Tattva-prakāśikā of Jayatīrtha and gloss Bhāvadīpa of Rāghavendra-tīrtha. Ed. R.S. Panchamukhi. Dharwad 1981.
BSBhV	Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Vijñānabhikṣu. Ed. Pdt. Mukunda Shastri. Benares 1900.
ChāndUp	Chāndogya-Upaniṣad.
ChāndUpBh	Chāndogya-Upaniṣad-Bhāṣya. Ed. Madras: Samata Books 1983 (Complete works of Sri Sankaracharya, vol. 9).
JB	Jaiminīya-Upaniṣad.
KāthS	Kāthaka-Saṁhitā.
LātyŚS	Lātyāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra.
MaiS	Maitrāyaṇīya-Saṁhitā.
Manu	Manu-Smṛti.
MBh	Mahābhāṣya. Ed. F. Kielhorn, 1880-1885, 3d ed. Pune 1962-1972.
MBhār	Mahābhārata. Ed. Pune 1933-1966.
MBhD	Mahābhāṣya-Dīpikā of Bhartrhari. Ed. Pune 1985-1991.
MS	Mīmāṃsā-Sūtra.
PB	Pañcaviṁśa-Brāhmaṇa.
RV	Rg-Veda.
ŚānGS	Śāṅkhāyana-Grhya-Sūtra.
ŚānŚS	Śāṅkhāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra.
ŚB	Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa (Mādhyandina-śākhā). Ed. A. Weber, London, 1855; transl. J. Eggeling, Sacred Books of the East, 1882-1900.
SK	Sāṁkhya-Kārikā.

ŚIV	Śloka-Vārttika of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, with Tātparyatīkā of Uṇveka Bhaṭṭa. Ed. R. Sastri 1971.
SPBh	Sāṃkhya-Pravacana-Bhāṣya by Vijñānabhikṣu. Ed. R. Garbe, Cambridge: Harvard Univ. 1895.
ŚrīBh	Śrī-Bhāṣya of Rāmānuja, and Śrutiprakāśikā of Sudarśana, ed. Uttamurti Viraraghavacarya, Madras 1967.
ŚrkBh	Śrīkara-Bhāṣya of Śrīpati Paṇḍitācārya. Ed. by Hayavadana Rao, Bangalore 1936.
SSV	Sāṃkhya-Saptati-Vṛtti. Ed. E.A. Solomon 1973a.
SS	Sāṃkhya-Sūtra. Ed. with Aniruddha's Sāṃkhya-Sūtra-Vṛtti by R. Garbe, Calcutta 1888.
SV	Sāṃkhya-Vṛtti. Ed. E.A. Solomon 1973b.
TB	Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa.
TK	Tattva-Kaumudī (on SK) of Vācaspati Miśra. Ed. S.A. Srinivasan, Hamburg, 1967.
TS	Taittirīya-Saṃhitā.
TV	Tattva-Vaiśārādī of Vācaspati Miśra, Ed. in: Pātañjalayoga-darśanam, Vācaspatimiśraviracita-Tattvavaiśārādī-Vijñāna-bhikṣukṛta-Yogavārtikavibhūṣita-Vyāsabhāṣyasametam, ed. by Nārāyaṇa-Miśra, Vārāṇasī, 1981. Tr. Woods 1914.
VaitS	Vaitāna-Sūtra. Ed. and Tr. R. Garbe, Strassburg: Trübner, 1878; Tr. W. Caland, Amsterdam: 1910.
VP	Vākyapadīya of Bhartṛhari. Ed. W. Rau, Wiesbaden: 1977.
VPS	Vedānta-Pārijāta-Saurabha of Nimbārka, and Vedānta-Kaustubha of Śrīnivāsa. Tr. by Roma Bose, Calcutta, 1940.
YājSm	Yājñavalkya-Smṛti, with the comm. Mitākṣarā of Vijñāneśvara. Ed. with Hindi-comm. Prakash by U.C. Pandey. Varanasi,
YB	Yoga-Bhāṣya. Ed. H.N. Apte, Pune: Ānandāśrama, 1904. Tr. Woods 1914.
YD	Yukti-Dīpikā. Ed. R.C. Pandeya, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967. Now also ed. by Wezler and Motegi, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998.
YS	Yoga-Sūtra. Ed. Tr. Woods 1914.
YV	Yoga-Vārttika of Vijñānabhikṣu. Ed. and Tr. T.S. Rukmani (4 vols.), Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1981-89; and see under TV.

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